COMPOSING MALAYSIAN POPULAR MUSIC FOR THE ORCHESTRA IN THE EARLY 21st CENTURY

This thesis is submitted to Middlesex University in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of mixed-mode PhD

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ABSTRACT

This music composition practice-based thesis is aimed at documenting and analysing my professional context as a popular music orchestral composer in Malaysia. Out of the 120 minutes of music I had composed, conducted and recorded during my doctoral study in London, I have selected four pieces to be included in the composition portfolio for discussion and analysis. Accounting for lived professional experience of more than 26 years in Malaysia, and connecting these experiences to the doctoral studies and practice in London, I view my practice as the subject and I write evocative narratives on my creative, research and professional lives.

The main subject matters of this research are everyday professional composition practices striving for an improvement in the composition skills; and the use of traditional instruments juxtaposed with Western music ensembles in the compositions. I describe the professional music context in Malaysia, the powers that shape the everyday profession, and the Malaysian penchant for hybridity and multiculturalism. I examine my habitual use of jazz harmony, memorable melodies and dance-like rhythms in my compositions, and I trace these habitual usages to how these composition features intersect with my professional, cultural and social context in Malaysia. I analyse the compositions in the portfolio, illuminating on the inspirations, imaginations and solutions contained therein.

I argue that the dissertation together with the composition portfolio contribute to the popular music orchestral composition studies in Malaysia.

INTRODUCTION

This introduction presents the practice-based research subject matter with the expected contribution to scholarly knowledge, discusses my professional context as an orchestral music composer funded by Malaysian government agencies, and finally examines how the process of my creative practices answers the research questions or reaches the research objectives.

The work for this practice-based research dissertation is two-fold. First, in Book 1, I have written about my experience and understanding as a professional popular music orchestral composer in the Malaysian context, complemented by two personal case studies that investigate the complexity in the everyday context. I then develop the individual exegesis of the four selected pieces of compositions, including passages of musical analysis and descriptions of creative inspirations.

For the second part of the dissertation, from the 120 minutes of live music composed, performed and recorded during my doctoral study in London from 2010 - 2012, I have selected four pieces to be included in the portfolio for submission. These four pieces were selected based on their increasing complexity in the instrumental line-up, often of different traditions. The portfolio of these four pieces in Book 2 shall include the master scores of the compositions, and the live audio-video recordings made during the presentation in the UK.

This study explores how I might improve my composition skills as a professional composer who serves broadcasting channels, live music platforms and other popular music avenues. How do working composers, Malaysian government funded in my case, break away from the everyday work that has

rewarded them financially for decades and strive for *eureka* moments of understanding, marking a major creative change? What are the bases for the creative decisions that such composers make in continuing to produce work for public consumption – music that is also commercially acceptable and ubiquitous in its dissemination?

Another strand of this study, extending from the above study objective, explores how the sound of ethnic instruments fits in with government-sponsored popular music in an ensemble line-up which mixes traditional and Western instruments. It asks how that mix might represent the sound of the people in Malaysia, providing a sense of place, or functioning as a postcard representation? How do we account for what might be called the sonic ontology, representation or identity of this music, particularly when it might be video-recorded with the musicians wearing ethnic costumes?

Background information and research subject matter

I have been employed by different government agencies in Malaysia to perform and compose for orchestras. The first full time employment which started in 1994 and ended in 2008, was by the Department of Broadcasting, where I was hired to work for Orkestra Radio Television Malaysia (Orkes RTM). I was playing the piano or keyboard synthesiser, and composing for the orchestra five days a week, all year long. Together with radio and television program producers in the Entertainment Unit, Orkestra RTM and invited popular singers were performing and recording for radio and television broadcasting purpose.

At the same time, I was also accepting general business assignments, often managing orchestra musicians hire, engaging celebrity singers for

concerts and private functions, and composing the accompaniment and required music for the orchestra. These private functions include product launches like the Mercedes Benz launch of new car models, wedding reception parties, and industrial award ceremonies.

Moreover, I was often seconded to the other public agencies which required my expertise on the piano and orchestral compositions. That is, I had had personal experience in performing and composing for launching ceremonies of national campaigns, for national sports tournaments, and for state banquets where the Sultans receive international dignitaries.

The desire and curiosity to research about this professional practice emerged when I left the Department of Broadcasting and moved to the National Arts Culture and Heritage Academy (ASWARA), another government agency in 2008. ASWARA, under the Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture Malaysia, has a mandate to train the next generation of arts and culture practitioners, in film, fine arts, theatre, dance, arts and culture management, and music. I was employed to train new musicians and composers in the trade of performing and composing music for the different government agencies and the commercial music industry.

As it is required of teaching faculty members in an education institution, I was given an opportunity to pursue and complete a doctoral degree. And I had chosen to research into the subject matter of how to compose ‘better’ compositions, and using Malaysian traditional instruments in a Western orchestral setting - as I expect these research subject matters to help my composition skills. In the following sections, I discuss these core research

questions related to the composition practice, aiming to arrive at a research-compositional strategy.

Find improvement in the practice of composition

The question of 'how to write better compositions' is a question that often emerges in different contexts - in the music industry and at the music conservatory. Composers who suffer from professional fatigue or burn-out, constantly search for the *eureka* moments, for the 'killer chords and melody', 'red hot beats', or something that can propel their work to stardom or some recognition at the least. Similarly, I was searching for these steps of improvement when I was working as a full-time piano player and composer at Orkestra RTM. This curiosity grew stronger when I moved to ASWARA and became a lecturer of music theory and composition, because I was searching for effective ways to explain to students what composition techniques work and how they would work.

In order to prepare for the composition in this doctoral practice-based research, I have started learning the European / American classical repertoire that attracts my interest. I was listening to and analysing works by Dvorak, Tchaikovsky, Stravinsky, Bartok, and Aaron Copland, and I had also attended composition forum conducted by Sir Peter Maxwell Davies at the Royal Academy of Music. With this studying, I aim to find and understand what makes these compositions become the canon of classical music: is it the melodies, the harmonies, the rhythm, the structure, the instrumentations, the orchestrations, the performances, or a combination of some or all of the above? With this knowledge and the understanding thereof, I aim to transfer it to my composition practice.

The first outcome of this exercise is the set of four string quartet movements, the first of which entitled '12356 MDX' is included in the portfolio for submission, as in Track 1.

The use of Malaysian traditional instruments

Since the early 20th century, it has been a relatively common practice in Malaysia to juxtapose traditional instruments in a Western music ensemble for the general public. Tan (2005, p.297) describes how Western instruments like violins, trumpets, drums sets were often used in the Malay folk music ensembles of *Ronggeng* and *Bangsawan* performances in the 1930s. My lived experience at Orkes RTM from 1994 till 2008, sixty years later, tells a similar story - I was frequently instructed to include traditional instruments like *sitar, erhu, rebana* and *gamelan* into the resident Western orchestra line-up.

In my earlier ABRSM[1] music studies in Malaysia (1978 – 1986) and later a music degree education in Boston (1990 – 1993), I had not learned about non-Western instruments. When it has become necessary to use them in the Malaysian professional context, the question then was how to use these instruments in a way that can highlight their timbre so they contribute effectively to the Western ensemble line up.

To prepare compositions with the juxtaposition of traditional instruments in a Western orchestra line-up, I studied the works of Tan Dun, Toru Takemitsu, Chou Wen-Chung, Kronos Quartet (particularly with the collaboration of *pipa* player), and Yo-Yo Ma's Silk Road Ensemble. Again, I was searching for what these composers had done in their work, and how I could transfer these

[1] Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music (ABRSM) is the examination board of the Royal Schools of Music, delivering over 650,000 music exams and assessments in over 93 countries, including Malaysia.

understandings into my own practice. Included in the portfolio for submission, the outcome of this exercise is *Lenggang Kangkong* with an ensemble line-up of gamelan and jazz big band, and *Jambatan Tamparuli* with Malaysian traditional ensemble and a chamber orchestra in London.

Research Gap and Expected Contribution to Scholarly Knowledge

Although Craig Lockard (1998) has written about the relationship between popular music and politics in Malaysia, tracing the development of popular music in Malaysia from the 1930s to the 1990s, this study may well be the first undertaken from the point of view of a Malaysian popular music practitioner. Other discussions of Malaysian social popular music include publications by Tan Sooi Beng (1997) on *bangsawan* and performing arts in Malaysia, by Margaret Sarkissian (2000) on live music produced in the Portuguese settlement in Melaka, and by James Chopyak (1986, 1987) on the role of music as Malaysian national culture, and music that has affected the development of Malaysian popular music.

Recently, Saidah Rastam (2017) has written about how the national anthem was adapted from a popular tune, Barendregt (2014) on the history of popular music in the Malay world, Weintraub A. and Barendregt B. (2014) on Asian female voices such as Siti Nurhaliza (one of the singers to be discussed in Case Study 1), Barendregt B., Keppy P. and Schult Nordholt H. (2017) about the history of popular music in Southeast Asia, and Adil Johan (2018) about cosmopolitan intimacy in Malay film music since the 1950s. Again, these earlier researches do not address the professional practice of popular music orchestral composers.

Given the recent and current paucity of published doctoral enquiry into their creative practices by Malaysian musical practitioners themselves, I argue that the outcome of this research, in the form of a composition portfolio, contributes to the orchestral composition studies in Malaysia. The discussions on the context and exegesis of the compositions will serve to illuminate the condition of the professional context in Malaysia, and the inspirations involved in the creative process through my personal and professional lens.

Structure of thesis

This practice-based research dissertation is separated into two parts:

1. Book 1 includes an Introduction, Chapter 1 on the Malaysian professional composer context and two case studies, Chapter 2 on the exegesis of the four pieces, and a Conclusion; and

2. Book 2 includes the master scores of the selected four pieces, and the corresponding audio-video recordings.

In Chapter 1, I include discussions on the general outline of popular music context in Malaysia, on the use of the term ‘popular music’ and what it means in the Malaysian context, on value and taste, on hybridity and multiculturalism, and on everyday practice. This chapter ends with two personal case studies, both in which I had composed the music and either performed or conducted the performances.

These two case studies provide an up-close, in-depth and detailed investigation of my composition practice and its related contextual position. The first-hand information contained here helps the readers understand the complex issues in the professional context in Malaysia.

In Chapter 2, I include exegeses of the four selected pieces, representative of the outcome of this practice-based research. In each of the exegeses, I discuss the inspirations and understandings that emerged while composing, while preparing and researching to compose, and during performance, production and recording. I have also briefly presented an analysis of the music scores, including the structure, the development, the instrumentations and orchestrations.

List of Audio and Video Material

Between 2010 and 2012, while studying full-time at Middlesex University, I composed and recorded more than 120 minutes of music for submission. I planned the ensemble line-up systematically, and recorded the performances on audio or video format.

Titles of pieces and year of composition:

1. '12356', String Quartet (July 2010).
2. Sheffield Chinese Music Ensemble, *Ti Oh Oh* (December 2011).
3. Mo Li Hua Concert (May 2011), *Lenggang Kangkung*.
4. *Simfonika 1Malaysia* (Oct 2012), *Jambatan Tamparuli*.

Problems in approaching a practice-based research PhD

Nelson (2013) proposed a procedure for undertaking research enquiry through arts practices: a model that includes 'know-how', a procedural knowledge gained through learning, often embedding tacit knowledge; 'know-what', an informed reflexivity which includes 'pausing, standing back and

thinking about what you are doing' (p.44), and 'know-that', the academic knowledge or propositional discourse drawn from reading of all kinds.

As a professional composer, I have taken for granted my expertise in everyday composition for an orchestra that performs popular music. In the doctoral studies, I hoped for a paradigm shift in my composition skills – I wanted to compose 'better' compositions at the least, if I cannot achieve a fundamental change in the practice of composition. I took the conventional route of studying music composition, that is, by studying the Western canon of orchestral music, and I hope the understanding can be transferred to my composition practice. The difficulty of identifying this qualitative transformation – intersecting know-how and know-that, pointing out the traces of the outcome of the doctoral studies, alludes to the part of this practice-led research that cannot be clearly articulated in the thesis. Any attempt to do so risks rendering it superficial and patronising.

Risking it, nevertheless, the obvious transformation is arguably manifested in the adoption of an instrumental ensemble of string quartet, a line-up that I have never used before the doctoral studies. Other deeper and fundamental transformations, albeit somewhat non-evidential, include the understanding and subsequent employment of 'implied' down-beat, 'breakdown' of unison passages, 'varying' recurring passages, and an imagined understanding of Schenkerian analysis. In the process of documenting and analysing my practices – the know-what, I have learned more about and reflect upon my composition habits, an ongoing process in the foreseeable future.

Melrose (2005) has argued that the practice of thesis writing about the music composition is far different from the practice of arts-disciplinary - in my

case music composition, performance-making processes. Particularly, she argued that 'institutionally-dominant discourses and practices of Performance Studies' differs from 'arts disciplinary professional experience of performance-making, the expert practitioner ethos, ethical engagement, sensing, intuitive play, desire and attitude'.

The difficulty that I have in relating my music composition practices to the compositional and professional context in a doctoral register points to the fact that the university requires that I have an expertise in knowledge-writing. Particularly, it may not be enough that I 'provide clear evidence of their grasp of disciplinary mastery, in the context of the performance communities and professions' (Melrose, 2003), but that I need to demonstrate evidence of a 'practice of expert-writing in highly specific technical and explanatory registers' specific to the university knowledge-economy.

Thompson and Pascal (2012) on the other hand, have built on earlier research by Thompson and Thompson in 2008 and proposed that researchers 'develop a *critical* approach that addresses the depth and breadth aspects of criticality and the interrelationships between the two' (p.13). The depth aspects refer to what lay 'beneath the surface of a situation, to see what assumptions are being made, what thoughts, feelings and values are being drawn upon' (p.13), while the breadth aspects refer to 'the broader sociological context and includes such factors as power relations, discrimination and oppression' (*ibid*). I find this critical approach adequately works in addressing the issues emerging from this autoethnography research.

Research methods and theoretical framework

Based on the practice-based research questions I have stated earlier, I find the following research methods and social theories useful in describing, explaining and concluding what my research aims to achieve:

1. **Autoethnography** as a research method, and also the outcome of research: I use my personal lived experience as primary data, for interpretation and analysis, and finally producing this dissertation in a reflexive voice. Not only do I focus on myself, I aim to understand others through self, that is, to understand the relationship of my composition practice within the professional context. As a research method, autoethnography acknowledges and accommodates subjectivity, emotionality and my influence on the research (Ellis *et al*, 2011, p.275).

Heewon Chang (2008) argues that autoethnography emphasises cultural analysis and interpretation of the researcher's behaviours, thoughts and experiences in relation to others in the society. The emphasis is on the cultural connection between self and the others representing the society. Chang also builds on the triadic balance of 'auto-ethno-graphy' and contends that 'autoethnography should be ethnographical in its methodological orientation, cultural in its interpretive orientation, and autobiographical in its content orientation' (p.48).

Chang's idea of triadic balance is reflected in my thesis through 1) the descriptions of my professional practice, including the everyday routine of popular music composition for the orchestra – ethnographical orientation, 2) the discussions of the cultural sensitivity embedded in the professional practice – cultural interpretation; and 3) my personal reflection of the subjectivity in the professional practice – autobiographical orientation.

Other variations of autoethnography experimental methods include some with a tendency towards emotion: ‘self-indulgent’ (Sparkes, 2002), ‘heartful’ (Ellis, 1999), and ‘evocative or emotional’ (Ellis, 2004) autoethnography. On the other hand, Anderson (2006) uses the term ‘analytic autoethnography’ to refer to the ethnographic work in which the researcher is a full member in the research setting, visible as such in the research published texts, and committed to improving theoretical understanding of broader social phenomena (Marak, 1995, p.5).

From the above variations of autoethnography, I tend to connect to the ‘heartful’ and ‘evocative or emotional’ variations as argued by Ellis in 1999 and 2004. This connection is reflected through my description of the performance at O2, in the event when the Prime Minister of Malaysia was visiting London. I described it as nostalgia, as how this performance would not have had the same affect if the event was held in Malaysia, in the home country.

Despite the support for autoethnography, there are some limitations: Hayano (1979) criticises the ‘intensive participant observation’ in autoethnography field work which consequently neglects the other research tools. Also, in undertaking fieldwork, the choice of a field location is often determined by the researcher’s identity and group membership. For example, international anthropologists in American universities are often expected to study ‘their own peoples’ rather than do fieldwork elsewhere.

I acknowledge these limitations and pitfalls by accepting them as part of this practice-based research process, in this case of an orchestra composition research project. I reckon that other research tools of qualitative nature including personal interviews and qualitative surveys can work in different ways

in a similar project, although I did not employ them. Also, to recognise the Malaysian public sponsorship of this doctoral studies, I find it appropriate that I study 'my own people', or my own music practices.

The most fundamental dilemma, nevertheless, concerns research bias and the objective-subjective polarity in collecting, interpreting and reporting ethnographic material. Particularly, how much the insider's viewpoint should be presented, and how accurate it is. While Chilungu (1976) disagrees that insiders are automatically biased in comparison to outside ethnographers, Jones (1970) strongly advocates subjectivity and involvement, arguing that the researcher should present data on behalf of and beneficial to the own membership group.

Issues of ethics also emerge in autoethnographic research and writings: Ellis (2004) finds that honest autoethnographic exploration generates fear, self-doubt and emotional pain. Also, there is the vulnerability of revealing oneself, not being able to take back what one have written, or having control over how readers interpret what the story is. Broadly, Guillemin and Gillam (2004) points to 'procedural ethics' that involves seeking approval from the relevant ethics committee, and 'ethics in practice' that involves how to behave in situations of personal or wounding situation.

I did not find any situations of wounding personal situation in the process of this practice and research, therefore it is not necessary to seek approval from the relevant ethics committee. I was worried about how Malaysian readers of this thesis interpret some passages in this thesis - particularly on the critical tendency of how music was used for the various political agenda, but I continue with the thesis writing as I find this would be an academic exercise. That is, I

recognise this writing to be within the limits of academic freedom, specifically intended for free exchange of ideas within a community of scholars.

2. The notion of **taste and value judgements** (Bourdieu, 1984) as a meta-theoretical framework to discuss the inquiry into the value judgement of compositions: I discuss the Malaysian taste for hybridity, the penchant for works of multiculturalism including the juxtaposition of traditional instruments in a Western ensemble line-up, and the political agenda of the Malaysian government to construct a national culture with a set value judgement.

The major point from Bourdieu's oeuvre that relates to my composition practice is that the discussion of taste and value judgement hinges on social and cultural background of the subject. That is, Bourdieu argues that judgements of taste are related to social positioning, or, in itself an act of social positioning. Particularly, the working-class aesthetics is a 'dominated' aesthetic, which is constantly obliged to define itself in terms of the dominant aesthetics of the ruling class (p. 41). While I do not consider my work to be of the 'working class' since my work is publicly funded, I consider this to be a situation where my work is often 'dominated' by the authorities. That is, I am constantly obliged to define my work in terms of the dominant aesthetics of the 'ruling class', in this case the authorities, the public institutions that hire me full time.

In my work for the orchestras that are publicly funded, the taste of the authorities decides what music there is to be performed. That is, the music is often politically motivated - music that is multicultural, hybrid, and one that is imagined to be the identity of the nation. The authorities – whose decisions are often arrived at in the form of committee consensus, also commission music that is popular in the air-waves or that which is viral on social media, including

popular music in the past, and some music from around the world, particularly of English lyrics. This practice fits Bourdieu's discussion of taste and value judgement, at least notionally, in that the social and cultural background of the decision makers set the tone of the taste for the orchestral performance.

3. The literal meaning of **everyday practice** to examine the nature of my daily work in the professional context: how the daily routine and drill of composing shape the professional practice, how the act of writing and talking about it, the thick description (Geertz, 2008) gives meaning and significance to the everyday practice.

In Olson's (2011) review of six authors who have written on everyday practice, she points out that it is a paradox to discuss the everyday as ordinary, because it stops being ordinary when we start discussing it. In the words of a housewife,[2] a monotonous task she does in the house becomes 'important when it has to be remembered and recorded' (Olson, 2011). That is, we give significance, by documenting it, to that which to others is insignificant. Olson finds that scholars deal with the issue by 'prioritizing the philosophies of everyday life or by examining literary and cultural representations of the everyday' (abstract). She argues that solving the paradox implicit in this distinction may mean maintaining a theoretical distance from actual practices, or exploring how we experience the everyday more generally, rather than specific everyday manifestations (Olson, 2011).

Among the six authors on whose work she focuses, Roberts (2006) advocates the revolutionary political potential of the everyday in the current usage of the term. Highmore (2002) seeks to find 'meaning in an impossible

[2] Mass-Observation project (1934), p. 70.

diversity (of the everyday)', and Gardiner (2000) stresses 'the importance of theorizing the everyday rather than describing it as a set of practices'. Meanwhile, Sheringham (2006) suggests that Henri Lefebvre seeks to 'find ways of teasing out the complex imbrication of the positive and the negative, alienation and freedom, within the weave of everyday life itself'. Each of these authors points to the fluidity and ambiguity of the notion of the everyday, whereas my own concern here tends to focus on something rather different: the creative and professional everyday.

While I draw in passing on these theoretical notions that have triggered reflection on my part, I do so notionally, rather than systematically. These theoretical notions are helpful as they provide the framework and space for imagination and understanding in my composition and dissertation.

CHAPTER 1 CONTEXTUALIZING MY PRACTICE

In this chapter, I aim to review the professional and industrial conditions of popular music practice in Malaysia by studying some representative instances, while also examining aspects of production and consumption with an external, objective and interpretive lens in analytical and historical terms. I propose to paint myself into the picture, substantiating this paper with a personal and self-reflexive account from the perspective of a practitioner-insider and drawing on my mix of professional and personal knowledge and experience in relation to the creative process and work in the public sphere.

Under the heading of 'Major Paradigms and Perspectives', Denzin and Lincoln (1994) briefly reference 'autoethnography' in conjunction with 'other new writing forms': they thereby put an emphasis on writing itself, and arguably on research-compositional strategies. They do add, however, that 'this tradition draws on the critical and constructivist paradigms, especially in a commitment to relativism and historical realism, transactional epistemologies, dialogic methodologies and social critique, as well as historically situated and trustworthy empirical materials' (pp101-102).

Trustworthy empirical materials can clearly be approached in terms of the privileged status of the information I include here: as a senior professional practitioner, working within Malaysian federal agencies, I bring information into play that relates to my role and relationships within mainstream agencies. My writing, in other words, has professional currency.

Malaysian popular music composers, broadly including music arrangers and orchestrators, find work through various channels, on many platforms and in different guises. These composers include those who supply their work to

radio and television stations, recording companies, individual singers and musicians (so called ‘indies’), musical theatres, music production companies linked to telecommunications providers, amateur and school bands and orchestras, and other general business functions including wedding receptions, birthday parties, corporate functions and product launches. Concert hall music opportunities include writing orchestral or smaller ensemble scores for concerts headlined by popular singers and dancers.

1.1 GENERAL OUTLINE OF POPULAR MUSIC IN MALAYSIA

Popular music in Malaysia as discussed in this thesis is shaped by the geographical, historical, political and cultural forces in the region. In this section, I aim to provide a general outlining of the popular music in Malaysia as I use the term within the context of composing for this portfolio, before turning to my own background as a popular music practitioner.

1.1.1 The Influence of Geography

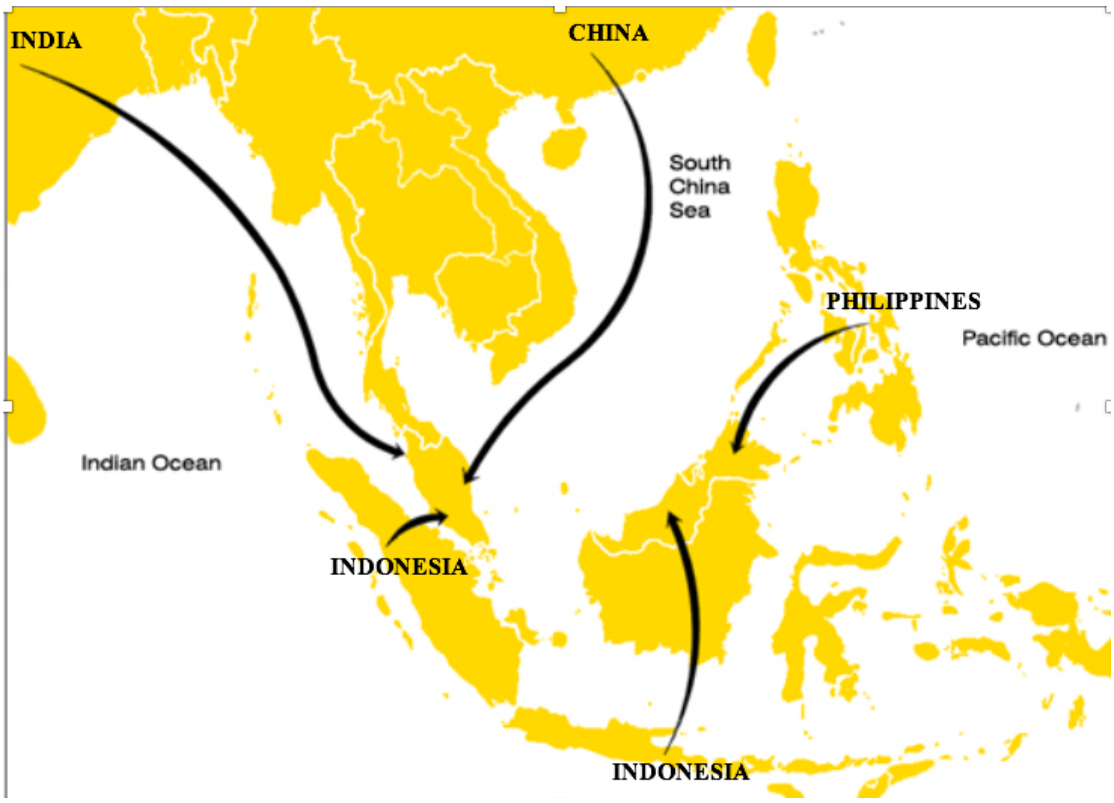


Figure 1.1 The arrows show the movement of people and their cultures into Malaysia

Malaysia is situated approximately at the centre of Southeast Asia, connecting to Thailand at the north, and Singapore at the south of the peninsular Malaysia. In addition, there are two more states that also belong to Malaysia - Sabah and Sarawak, and a federal territory, Labuan, situated on the Borneo island, bordering Brunei Darulsalam and Indonesia. As illustrated in the map (Fig 1.1), Malaysia is poised to receive immigrants together with its music cultures from far – China, India, middle east, and near – Thailand, Indonesia, and the Philippines. As discussed in *A History of Malaysia,* Andaya (1984) finds that 'the complex cultural heritage of Malaysia is shown to be decisive in shaping its history … equally important is Malaysia's strategic position on an international trade route linking China, India, and the West' (preface pages).

The popular music in Malaysia, in question, is much influenced by the movements of people, trade and cultures from these areas. And each of these areas of origins weighs differently at different periods in history as their roles in and with Malaysia have changed over time. Take the influence of Chinese music and cultures, and Indian music and cultures for example, their roles have changed from one that follows the mass immigration in the 19th century[3], to one of commerce and trade in the 20th century (Amarjit Kaur, 2009), and now one of local and national homegrown music and cultures - as generations of Chinese and Indians were born and have grown to become Malaysian music practitioners. These musicians continue to create music that is embedded with unique Malaysian elements – and I am one of them. I am a Malaysian ethnic Chinese musician composer, I was born and bred in Malaysia and I work exclusively for public agencies.

Returning to the topic in hand, while mass immigration from China and India to Malaysia stopped in the mid 20th century[4], particularly when Malaya gained independence from Britain, the mass immigration from Indonesia continues well into the 21st century, legally or illegally (Tan, APMRN, 1997). With the movement of these people, there follows the music and cultures of Indonesian origin and influence, and some Malaysian public, particularly of the Malay population, have subsequently adopted the taste for *dangdut*[5], and *pop etnik*[6]

[3] The mass immigration in the mid 19th century is the result of cheap labour being brought in to work in the tin mining fields and agricultural plantations.
[4] Since 1928, the British colonial government enacted the Immigration Restriction Ordinance, Aliens Ordinance (1933), and Immigration Ordinance of 1953, which effectively stopped the free flow of immigrants into Malaya.
[5] Dangdut is a genre of Indonesian folk music that is partly derived and fused from Hindustani, Arabic music and to a lesser extent, Malay folk music. Dangdut is a very popular genre in Indonesia and also Malaysia because of its melodious vocals and instrumentation. Dangdut features a *tabla* and gendang beat.
[6] Popular songs that are ethnic and folk tradition informed.

for example. This adoption is particularly convenient[7] because the Malaysian and Indonesian languages share the same roots and somewhat similar development over the years. This convenience arguably connects the popular music industry of Malaysia to that of Indonesia, which has a population of 260 million, compared to a mere 32 million in Malaysia.

The significance of this understanding is that the geographical position of Malaysia has shaped the music traditions therein, with the early immigrants and colonisers bringing with them their music, subsequently merged, localized and synthesized to become the Malaysian music – which continues to transform, change and grow.

1.1.2 The Influence of History

From the early 16th century until Malaya gained independence in 1957, peninsular Malaysia was colonised by European powers like the Portuguese (1511 - 1641), Dutch (1641 – 1825) and finally the British (1824 – 1957), the last of which left a long-lasting mark on the political system, educational preferences, and other cultural and societal practices[8]. For example, with the mastery of the English language, Malaysian readily receive music training from the UK education system and later from the US education system. In turn, Malaysian music industry is much influenced, at least in part, by British and American music historically.

In the meantime, with extensive Chinese language public education at the primary and secondary school level, and also Tamil language public education

[7] Not only Malaysia and Indonesia share a similar language, lyrics are important in Malaysian popular music, this adoption is therefore convenient.
[8] The states of Sabah dan Sawarak on Borneo were also once British colony. They had joined the federation of Malaya in 1963, forming the nation state of Malaysia.

at primary school level - educating primarily ethnic Chinese and Indian students, a substantive population in Malaysia have a solid command of the Chinese or Tamil languages in addition to the national language of Malay. The significance is that a significant segment of the music industry in Malaysia, while locally funded and managed, is much influenced by music from greater China and India.

1.2 DEFINITION OF POPULAR MUSIC IN MALAYSIA

'Popular' as defined by Raymond Williams (1983, p.198-199) points to different meanings over the centuries. Originally a legal and political term, from *popularis* in Latin, it means belonging to the people. From 15th century, the use of the word 'popular' in policy carries with it a sense of 'low' or 'base', followed by the sense of 'widely-flavoured' and 'well-liked' in the 18th and 19th century, but also the senses of 'inferior kinds of work' (popular press as distinguished from quality press) and 'work deliberately setting out to win favour' (popular journalism as distinguished from democratic journalism). Williams also explains that in the 20th century, when popular song and popular art are shortened to 'pop', the shortening gives it a lively informality that nevertheless opens it to a sense of the trivial. In short, while the usage and meaning of 'popular' differ over the centuries, the strong sense of inferior position, trivial and deliberately setting out to win favour is often predominant.

By extension, the definition of 'popular music' within the scope of popular music studies discusses about how the music is treated like a marketplace commodity in a capitalist context, how it appeals to diverse listeners under different social context, and how popular music is likely to be learned by

listening, as opposed to learning classical music by reading sheet music (Tagg, 1982).

For the purpose of this thesis, I describe 'popular music' in Malaysia broadly by referring to the music that fits one or more of the following descriptions:

i. commercially successful – that the producers and investors receive financial gains from the sales of this music;

ii. extended outreach – that this music travels far and deep through different platforms of dissemination; that many Malaysians have heard of the music, they know the music by being able to hum and move to excerpts of it, and they talk about it;

iii. familiar forms – that this music has Anglo-American popular music conventional harmony, song structure sung by well-known singers, and common arrangements of music;

iv. produced locally – that this music production is rooted in a particular space, physically within a community, a country, although the music can be consumed on an online platform like YouTube, Spotify and others.

v. in the form of song – that popular music is nearly always sung, with lyrics in Malaysian languages including Malay, English, Mandarin, and Tamil.

vi. adaption – that this music is adapted from a dance, a TV series, or adapted for an advertisement, or for other usage other than it was first intended.

1.2.1 The Features of Popular Music in Malaysia

In the following sections, I compare popular music with the other genres of music in Malaysia. The other genres of music - overlapping in styles with popular music at times, include 1) European symphonic music performed in the concert halls, pieces by Bach, Beethoven and Brahms for example. This music

is broadly referred to as classical music, and the players and audiences are normally rich population who were trained or exposed to the genre earlier in their lives, often in Europe or America. Most music schools in Malaysia which offer systematic music lessons would start with this European classical music tradition; 2) Music commonly found in selected communities performed by ensembles of non-Western ethnic instruments, like the gamelan ensemble, *ghazal* ensemble, Indian music ensemble, or Chinese orchestra. This music is broadly referred to as traditional music, and its players and audiences are normally from the community of the tradition. This genre of music is increasingly being taught systematically in music schools at tertiary level in Malaysia, partly from the desire to forge a unique music identity; 3) Other genres that have a smaller segment of followers, including jazz, rap, metal, acid Rock, *dangdut, kroncong,* and others. These genres are nevertheless increasingly exposed to the population in Malaysia following the wide and cheap access to the Internet, which make all this music readily available.

I have found that the popular music in Malaysia has traces of different genres of music. Based on the annual award show *Anugerah Juara Lagu* (AJL) which recognises the most popular songs in Malaysia over the past year, the twelve winning songs in January 2020 have six that have elements of Malaysian ethnic traditional music embedded[9]. The other four tunes sound similar to American Top 40 chart hits, only with the lyrics in Malay language.

Since 2008, the winning songs are simply voted in regardless of their genre differentiation. There were '*balada nusantara*' (loosely translated to be

[9] Announcement of selected AJL2020 tunes: https://ohbulan.com/senarai-12-lagu-bakal-berentap-di-aksi-anugerah-juara-lagu-ke-34/

‘*nusantara* regional ballad’), and ‘*tradisional contemporari’* (loosely translated as contemporary traditional songs), both categories clearly pointing out the traditional music influence in the most popular tunes in Malaysia. These traditional music influences are represented by the generous use of traditional percussion instruments, and solo plucked, bowed, or blown instruments that are not usually found in Western symphony orchestras or bands.

I argue that popular music in Malaysia is regarded and consumed like a fast-moving commodity or material culture, not unlike crisps, candies, or magazines, which would be picked up at the check-out counters. Often, this popular music is freely available on national or community radio and television channels, YouTube, Spotify or other online sharing platforms. The public expect to consume popular music for a very small fee or for free, and that this music will continue to be produced for mass consumption.

How is popular music positioned differently from classical music, from traditional music in Malaysia? Broadly speaking, the popular music industry is bigger in terms of turnover, of how much economic return and synergy it can generate, while classical music and traditional music cater to a niche group of audience / consumers.

The classical music industry had the UK music education system in Malaysia to support its continual growth. That is, the authoritative ABRSM system from the UK establishes music schools and organises examinations for children of middle-class families in Malaysia, disseminating the Western classical canon.

Also, the classical music industry has the support of the national oil and gas company Petronas to support the full time Malaysian Philharmonic

Orchestra, and the Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture to support the full time National Symphony Orchestra. That is, Malaysia has two professional symphony orchestras performing Western classical repertoire, which directly or indirectly fulfil the demand for this genre of music.

The traditional music industry[10] in Malaysia, on the other hand, has the 'nation' behind it. Particularly, nationalists vigorously identify with the related music, and sometimes to the extent of excluding the other genres of music. This is especially palpable when nationalists lean on the agenda of nation building and cultural identity, as traditional music is often accepted as part of the symbols of national and cultural identity. Receptions hosted by the heads of states, or by the prime minister for international guests, for example, almost always have traditional music as entertainment, with an aim to highlight the national identity.

I argue that popular music in Malaysia – with traces of classical music, traditional music and various music influences including traditional dance and electronic dance, is the mainstream in Malaysia. This is a genre that is shared by most people, and regarded as common or conventional. This genre of music is heard on the radio channels, television channels, in the malls, and consumed in the car, on the move and mostly through various digital devices like the smartphones and tablets.

I argue that the music that I compose for the purpose of this research is informed and shaped by the popular music in Malaysia. By composing these

[10] Traditional music industry broadly includes local music practitioners of oral tradition and the peripheral industry.

pieces during my 3-year stay in London, I aim to address the research questions that I had presented at the beginning of this Chapter.

1.2.2 Popular Music Orchestral Composers

The main organisational employers for popular music orchestral composers and musicians in Malaysia are broadcasting stations, including Radio TV Malaysia (RTM), Media Prima, and Astro, government agencies like the Ministry of Tourism, Arts, and Culture, and local councils like Kuala Lumpur City Hall and Penang City Hall. The orchestral composers who are sometimes commissioned and sometimes employed on a contractual full-time basis, provide the organisations with music for radio and television programmes, including programme signature tunes, musical accompaniments to singing and dancing programmes, underscores for documentaries, live performances of orchestral or smaller ensembles. Their work fits with measures of popular music proposed by Taylor (2007), who finds it to be distributed via mass media and connected with commercialisation, promoting products and services.

Not unlike concert halls, theatres in Kuala Lumpur, including Istana Budaya, KL Performing Arts Centre (KLPac), Oditorium MATIC (Malaysia Tourism Information Centre) and Damansara Performing Arts Centre (DPac), stage musicals, theatre and multimedia performances employ the services of popular music composers by commission. These productions usually include songs or instrumental music that are tailored and functional, supporting the purpose of the theatre or drama.

These theatre orchestral composers are often, although not always, bandleaders or musicians who perform their compositions in the orchestra pit

or bandstand. ‘Live’ performing opportunities include gigs in casinos, on cruise ships, in hotels, restaurants and entertainment outlets, and at performing arts festivals and celebrations, workshops and demonstrations.

These orchestral composers usually obtain commissions through personal and professional networks. Long-surviving, thriving or so-called successful composers work closely with professional musicians to facilitate the delivery of music performances or recordings. These composers also understand and meet the expectations of the audience or paymaster. The axiom of such transactions is that ‘jobs’ should be delivered smoothly and payment made promptly – it is really an everyday job for these professional popular music composers.

These popular music orchestral composers seldom make changes to their works once they are performed or released. In fact, in the context of the broadcasting orchestra, the works of the resident composers are seldom re-performed. In other words, all these works are ‘instant’, meant to be ‘*cepat di masak, sedap di makan’* (literally, ‘it cooks quickly and it tastes delicious’) – a jingle theme for Maggi Instant Noodles in Malaysia in the 1980s. The Malaysian popular music context arguably contradicts Timothy Taylor’s ‘classical music syndrome’ capturing the nineteenth-century perception of the ‘genius composer’ and ‘perfect work’.

It is also worth emphasizing that description of the Malaysian popular music is arguably different from conceptions of certain Western popular music genres. Whereas pop is sometimes dismissed as being disposable, genres such as rock aspired to longevity. Moreover, despite its supposed disposability,

much pop music has been durable. In Malaysia, however, pop music from the past is only resurrected for retro thematic purposes, and for tribute concerts.

In the above paragraphs, after a brief discussion of my research questions, including the method of autoethnography and the research gap, I have introduced a general outline of the popular music context in Malaysia. I have explained the geographical and historical perspectives, and I have defined what popular music is, and how it compares to the other genres in Malaysia. Finally, I have briefly described the main organisations which hire popular music composers, and a brief description of the work. In the following section, I aim to connect the main music industry players to their education background.

1.3 BERKLEE COLLEGE OF MUSIC TRAINING AND CONNECTION

A common thread that links most Malaysian popular music orchestral composers is that they were trained at Berklee College of Music in Boston, USA. This began with Ahmad Merican in the early 1960s, followed by Johari Salleh and Hanafie Imam, as well as Jenny Chin, Mac Chew and Helen Yap in the 1980s, then Mokhzani Ismail, Aznul Haidi, and myself, who work or have worked at the Orkestra Radio TV Malaysia, and Muriz Che Rose at the Dewan Filharmonik Petronas in the 1990s. This list is not exhaustive, but these are composers who are active in composing professionally.

When the Akademi Seni Kebangsaan (ASK), which subsequently developed into the Akademi Seni Budaya & Warisan Kebangsaan (ASWARA), was set up in 1995 in Kuala Lumpur, the first dean of the music department was Hanafie Imam, who was succeeded by his brother Ramlan Imam. Adopting the Berklee College of Music syllabus, ASK graduates at the turn of the millennium included Shamsul Zain, Lillian Loo and Leonard Yeap, who started to serve the

popular music industry and exerted a very significant influence, directly or indirectly. In addition, Berklee graduate performer Michael Veerapen, known as a jazz piano player and music producer, obtained commissions to lead commercial musicals at Istana Budaya, such as *SuperMokh* (2013), and to compose numerous jingles, including for the Dunhill tobacco brand in the 1980s.

Another prominent Berklee graduate is Ahmad Izham Omar, who graduated in 1992 and is now CEO of Media Prima, the owner-organisation of almost all private broadcasting stations. The 'Berklee jazz sound' – itself a casual label in terms of harmony, form, style and repertoire – has gradually become a significant fabric of the aesthetics of these active composers in Malaysia. The strategic positions they hold, the work they produce, and subsequently the influences they exert, significantly affect judgements of taste and value, not only by the composers, but also by the general public in Malaysia, at least among the urban population.

In 1990, two prominent Berklee graduate composers, Jenny Chin and Mac Chew, arranged a stylistically significant album *Legenda* (1990) for popular singer Sheila Majid. Many P. Ramlee[11] originals, mostly film classics from the 1960s including *Bila Larut Malam*, *Tiru Macam Saya*, *Bunyi Gitar* and *Manusia*, were turned into 'new' works after Chin and Chew applied composition techniques, creating an album that sounds like 'American R&B'. For this album, Chin and Chew used jazz harmony as the main tonality, as well as drum patterns and sounds of the American Top 40, and mixed and mastered it into

[11] P Ramlee was one of the most prolific Malaysian song writer and film director in the 1950-70s. His songs continue to be widely performed and his movies regularly broadcasted today. For more information refer to https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/P._Ramlee.

the 'sound' of the American chart toppers. '*Legenda*'[12] remains one of the most popular Malaysian albums almost 25 years later, although it attracts criticism that the producers 'destroyed' the nationally treasured work of P. Ramlee so as to be almost unrecognisable. However, since the album is popular and therefore reviving old tunes, it can be argued that the injection of jazz elements has rejuvenated some otherwise museum display pieces (Goehr, 1992). Any piece of work that is 'alive' will change – one of the main characteristics of popular art forms. P. Ramlee tunes from popular Malaysian and Singaporean movies, when given current treatment by these popular music composers, 'grow' and are hence transformed, often beyond expectation. In subsequent chapter I will draw on this living and changing phenomenon to account for judgements of taste and value by Malaysian popular music composers.

As discussed above concerning the Berklee jazz sound, American jazz influence is not new in Malaysia. From the 1940s to the 1970s, professional Filipino musicians were imported into Kuala Lumpur to entertain European expatriates and elite locals (Chelliah, 1974). Filipino musicians, with their Spanish and American colonial background, were at home with jazz and European music traditions. While most performed European and American repertoires, one notable Malaysia-born Filipino musician, Alfonso Soliano, with a jazz and European music background, performed in *Bangsawan* troops[13],

[12] Legenda remains one of the most successful albums produced in Malaysia, which includes songs composed by P Ramlee, but arranged in urban Western style. For more information, please refer to https://ms.wikipedia.org/wiki/Legenda_(album)

[13] *Bangsawan* troops are touring musical theatre programs popular in the 19th till mid 20th century. Prior to the development of the radio and television entertainment in the region, *Bangsawan* is the main source of entertainment for local Malays in the villages and cities alike, and was held in high anticipation and excitement. There are no more working *Bangsawan* troops in Malaysia today.

composing and playing Malaysian popular music of the time. In other words, there has historically been so much adaptation and appropriation of the 'other' in Malaysian music, dating back to the second half of the nineteenth century, that it is complex, ambiguous and possibly futile to trace its genealogy and pinpoint the 'crossing of paths'. It is, however, useful to recognise that most Malaysian popular music composers were trained in the European and American music education system, have absorbed a selective global music aesthetic philosophy, and have created works that balance personal agency and professional context.

1.3.1 Other music education

Against the above background, coupled with the broad analysis above that argues that popular music in Malaysia has traces of music from different traditions, I differentiate this popular music from the canonic European repertoire of Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven and Bartok, which is the main repertoire of music students who have studied the UK Associated Board of Royal School of Music (ABRSM) syllabus. In the years immediately after Malaysia gained independence from the British in 1957, and until the turn of the millennium, ABRSM was the systematic music education provider in Malaysia, Singapore and Hong Kong. For decades, the Malaysian public, and specifically parents of music-learning children from the middle upper class, was given the impression that formal music education was synonymous with the British music education system. All other music was therefore 'not formal' and 'popular', a phenomenon that points to a judgement of taste and value resulting from political and historical circumstances.

With the demise of British supremacy, as Malaysian music students increasingly learn their trade from the US and other European and Asian countries, music education and its peripheral conditions affect Malaysian popular music composers in their everyday music practice. This is evident from the output of the Malaysian music industry that broadly shadows the music industries in the US, and other countries like Taiwan, China, Korea and Japan, particularly in the popular music segments.

1.3.2 Scope of work

Professionally, in their everyday work, Malaysian popular music composers are expert and skilful musicians who transcribe, arrange, and produce music material quickly. Among other tasks, they listen and transcribe existing material, understand the style and expectations, and produce music scores to meet these expectations. Their general manifestation of creativity lies predominantly in the skills of instrumentation and orchestration, harmonisation and re-harmonisation, creating and embellishing melodies, and building and re-constructing the form of a piece, all of which determine, at least in part, the outcome of the performance.

The compositions I refer to here – represented by my work in the portfolio - are often, though not always, borrowings or appropriations of existing material. The 'new' material in such work consists of new introductions, different endings, unfamiliar music bridges, different keys, and unusual instrumental line-ups, style or a novel 'feel'. The border between new and pre-existing material is often blurred as a result of the juxtaposition of different elements. That is, what is declared to be 'new' often seems derivative, and pre-existing material may appear original. It may therefore be contended that Malaysian popular music

composers concentrate on finding solutions to musical challenges, but probably do not aim to create ‘masterpieces’, the classical music ideology of early nineteenth-century Europe (Taylor, 2007). In other words, originality and subversion are thought to be hallmarks of Western popular music, which arguably differs from what the Malaysian popular music composers strive for. In line with autoethnography method, I take my professional practice as the central example: I do not aim for originality and subversion. Instead, I aim for usefulness of the pieces, effective pieces – that the work can be performed easily by professional musicians, that the work is well liked by the pay master and the audience.

The criteria outlined briefly above are embedded in this everyday practice – in the words of Lefebvre, rescuing ‘each facet of the quotidian from anonymity ... where repetition and creativity confront each other’ (Johnstone, 2008) – and these popular music composers aim largely for a positive reception from consumers that can be broadly translated into commercial success. These composers get employed on a contractual basis by various public agencies, or they get paid through commissions of work.

In the context of Malaysian popular music, this everyday creativity is used on so many platforms so many times – as advertising jingles, in live music occasions, and in schools. In other words, this ‘usefulness’ is of everyday value. My interest is to see if I can acquire improvement to everyday compositions.

When I embarked on my doctoral studies, I was prepared to start composing work that would constitute an improvement from what I had been composing over the previous twenty-five years. However, as much as I explored, appreciated and studied a variety of work of different genres and from

different composition concepts during my stay in London, I found that when I composed in a creative 'flow', I was bound by a set of judgements of taste and value. In other words, I was still making creative decisions that seemingly appeared little different from what I had been doing previously. Analysis and studies of scores, recordings and live concerts also reveal that I have held on to a set and established judgements of taste and value, as much of my work included here demonstrates.

I have identified what appeals to me and to my imagined patrons – the Malaysian audience. Therefore, I would argue that judgments of excellence in taste and value according to the respective criteria have been the guiding principle in this creative portfolio.

1.4 VALUE. TASTE

What value, artistic or otherwise, do I command as composer? Particularly when I make a decent living out of writing this kind of popular music?

I argue that it takes much expertise to compose Malaysian popular music. The musical training that a composer needs in order to produce music that 'works' – popular or not – is always rigorous. Composers need to have education and experience in the study of melody, harmony, rhythm, form, texture, timbre, musical instrumentation and orchestration, as well as audio equipment if they deal with the technical side of the production. In addition, they will do well to have in-depth knowledge of the repertoire, the tradition and the uniqueness of the particular music with which they are dealing. In other words, while the German music of Beethoven, Brahms, Wagner and Schoenberg is regarded as 'serious music', it takes equal training and knowledge, of another

sort, to compose for the musical '*Cuci*', Kumpulan Koir Jabatan Perkhidmatan Awam, Siti Nurhaliza, or a new *Bangsawan* production in Kuala Lumpur. Malaysian composers have first to master the skills of composing music, and they also have a unique set of aesthetic standards to which to adhere.

This system of standards is continuously shaped by multiple and fluid judgements of taste and value by the Malaysian audience, alluding to the professional context that forms a power struggle for composer authorship and agency which, again, with its multiple musical representations, is complex and fluid. Arguably, Malaysian popular music composers make particular judgements of taste and value that nevertheless match the trend of the day and fulfil the imagination of the consumers. In everyday professional practice, they 'mix 'n' match' musical cultures, many of which are cross-border traditions, finally juxtaposing or fusing them into compositions. These composers find that the expectations of their audiences, including paymasters and other stakeholders, often dictate their artistic choices, but they negotiate and resist these by delivering a 'twist' to the expectations so that composer authorship and agency triumph in a compromised fashion. In other words, a dialectical relationship exists between acts of musical communication on the one hand, and political, economic and cultural power relations on the other (Born and Hesmondhalgh, 2000).

Drawing from Born and Hesmondhalgh (2000, p.45) again, the notion of 'dual economic and cultural extraction' seems to fit the Malaysian commercialisation and appropriation of music from various traditions. That is, in order to understand Malaysian composers' judgements of taste and value, it is insufficient to base our understanding of this appropriation, movement and

exchange of music solely on historical, political or cultural theories. It is useful instead, in my view, to examine the creative and occupational experiences of the composers, revealing the power dynamics of a *habitus* instilled (Born, p. 78) in childhood and schooling – conditions that cannot be usefully separated from historical circumstances, without, in my view, being wholly generated by them. The composers' *habitus* – or cultural 'tendencies' - is currently fluid, complex, and globalised, the last of which points to capitalism. In other words, it is most helpful to look at how popular music composers achieve a delicate 'balance between commerce and art … between the urge to create and the opportunity to profit from that creation' (*Riverdance* creator Bill Whelan, 2010, cited in Bernini, 2014).

In the above paragraphs, I have broadly outlined the aims of this research undertaking through the composition practice, introduced the influential people in the Malaysian music industry who have studied at the Berklee College of Music in Boston, and connected these backgrounds to the imagined taste and value of the Malaysian mainstream audience and the composers who supply work which fulfils this demand.

In the following sections, I aim to paint the background of employing non-Western Malaysian instruments in my work. I trace this habit of juxtaposing instruments and music of different traditions to the multiracial and multicultural context in Malaysia.

1.4.1 Multiculturalism. Interculturalism

A term commonly used in the discourse of Malaysian studies is 'multicultural', a label resulting from multiple racial compositions in Malaysia –

there are the majority Malay race (63.1%), local born Chinese (24.6%), local born Indians (7.3%), and others (5%). A problem of interpretation arises when 'races' are confused or equated with 'cultures'. In fact, 'race' and 'culture' are both words that defy simple definition, with the situation in Malaysia being especially difficult. People of the Chinese race – the term 'Chinese' itself being a problematic notion – may not observe Chinese cultural practices, while the Chinese culture in the People's Republic of China is constantly undergoing change. The people of the Malay race, on the other hand, are sometimes seen to be adopting Arab cultural practices implied by the religious practice of Islam. Composers' judgements of taste and value, which are arguably multicultural in Malaysia, are embedded in a complex system of history, influence and power struggle. I argue that the identification and equation of a race with its music, borrowed and appropriated from itself, is an artificially enforced source of musical imaginary and musical construction. Bloor (2010) describes multiculturalism as the cultural diversity of communities within a given society and the policies that promote this diversity.

By implication, the term 'interculturalism' surfaces to problematise, and perhaps to complement, the argument of this thesis. In the *Performing Arts of South East Asia* (PASEA) symposium held in Bali, Indonesia in June 2014, the term 'intercultural' was foregrounded as a key theme, with Theme I being 'Interculturalism and the Mobility of Performing Arts in Southeast Asia'. Interculturalism broadly refers to support for cross-cultural communication and interaction, and challenges self-segregation tendencies within cultures (Nagle, 2009). Malaysian state-sponsored efforts to promote intercultural dialogue

highlight the politics of representation and appropriation in Malaysian state-sponsored popular music.

For example, the Ministry of Culture, Ministry of Tourism and Ministry of Information have taken deliberate, calculated and orchestrated steps to portray multi-ethnic, multi-cultural, multi-faith citizens living in harmony. This includes audio-visual images of female actors in different ethnic costumes, orchestral programmes with instruments from different traditions, and each festive celebration singular to a particular race – with depictions of all other Malaysians joining in the carnival. Television and radio channels broadcast such 'united' impressions, and newspapers in various languages also promote the political agenda.

However, contradicting this notion of 'social cohesion' (a term drawn from Shamsul),[14] are incidences that show a totally 'chaotic' nation. Prime examples of negative tensions between races or cultures include politician Ibrahim Ali threatening to burn bibles in Bahasa Malaysia (January 2013), the Malaysian High Court banning the use of the word 'Allah' by non-Muslims (October 2017), and groups hurling derogatory remarks like '*pendatang*' (pejoratively translated as 'new arrivals') at Malaysian-Chinese and Malaysian-Indians. There appears to be a gap between what is imagined and portrayed by the government, and real life or news reported in the media. How is this mismatch reflected in the popular music scene? What does it tell us about the value and taste of the composers?

[14] Professor Shamsul Amri Baharuddin, director of the Institute of Ethnic Studies, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia promoted 'social cohesion' rather than 'national unity' in a Non-Discrimination Conference held on 30 September 2014.

1.4.2 Hybridity. Power

Figure 1.3: Image taken from http://januarism.blogspot.com (accessed 6 September 2014)

In conjunction with the celebration of Malaysia Day (‘*Hari Malaysia’)* in 2014, a full-page advertisement (Figure 1.3) was run in *The Star* (14 September 2014, p.26), the English language daily with the highest print or digital circulation in Malaysia. The highlighted word ‘*campur*’ broadly translates as an act of adding or mixing, or the adjective of added together or mixed together. Examples of use of the word in the Malay language include ‘*nasi campur*’ (mixed rice), ‘*kahwin campur*’ (interracial marriage) and ‘*sayur campur*’ (mixed vegetables). Another Malay word used in the sentence is ‘*nasi*’, meaning rice, a staple food in Malaysia, which is used here to construct the phrase ‘*nasi campur’*. The image depicts January Low, a Malaysian-Chinese who shot to

fame as a dancer of the classical Indian dance Bharatanatyam, with her Malaysian-Indian husband Siva and their twin children. A remarkable aspect of this photo is the traditional Malay costume that all of them wear, although so many Malaysians now wear *baju kurung* and *baju Melayu*[15] that the costume is no longer a potent signifier of the Malay race. Deliberately wearing *baju Melayu* in this photo to express 'I like Malaysia…', as in the caption, alludes to an enthusiasm for parading loyalty to Malaysia. January and Siva are all smiles with their children. They gaze out to the viewer, apparently aware that they are on display; they want to be displayed, and the power relationship with the viewers is balanced, seductive, and even symbiotic. Arguably, viewers want to see this public display of patriotic sentiment, and January and Siva are duly satisfying the demand. They invite the viewers to concur with their proposition of '*campur*'; that is, adding and mixing into the matrix – including marriage, rice and, presumably, arts practices like music composition.

In the above sections I have included explanations of multiculturalism and the resulting hybridity in the everyday life in Malaysia, which in turn have informed my music practices. I shall now focus on my professional practice to discuss the context of my practice portfolio submission.

1.5 MY PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE & THE SUBMISSION PORTFOLIO

I have acquired the professional skills of music performance and music composition from first attending and training at Berklee College of Music 30 years ago, thereafter working full time in performance and composition in Malaysia. I have been earning a comfortable living from working full time in the

[15] *Baju kurung* and *baju Melayu* are Malay traditional costumes, with *baju kurung* for women and *baju Melayu* for men.

public agencies, performing and composing music for various national or public events. In the following sections, I aim to describe and discuss the everyday practice of a professional popular music composer in Malaysia, drawing from two case studies in which I was involved as a composer: 1) the royal concert that was held in Kuala Lumpur shortly after I returned from London in September 2013; and 2) 'Simfonika 1Malaysia' the final set of compositions I had composed in London for the dedicated purpose of doctoral submission.

I argue that the following discussions shall set the framework of Malaysian music and cultures for the exegesis included in Chapter 2.

1.5.1 Everyday practice

Everyday

> What is an art or 'way of making' [in the everyday]? …a long tradition has sought to describe with precision the complex…rules that account for these operations. From this point of view, "popular culture" …[takes] on a different aspect: they present themselves essentially as "arts of making" this or that…utilizing modes of consumption. (M. de Certeau (1984) *The Practice of Everyday Life*, xv)

According to Michel de Certeau, the everyday has commonly been assumed by researchers and analysts to be passive and guided by established rules, and in this sense diminished, whereas in his approach the everyday practitioner might be seen as engaged in an *art of everyday practice* which can play actively with these established rules, inventing an art of *making do* within established cultural parameters (1984). De Certeau's work in the 1980s was instrumental in changing the ways the noun and adjective 'pedestrian' might be understood – as playful or the acts of a player, within the established rules and roles of the social. Drawing on definitions of 'everyday' and 'every day', the aim of this section is to describe, analyse and provide insight into my everyday creative practices: the creative everyday-ness and everyday creativity.

For example, while I brush my teeth every day and I eat breakfast every day, I do not compose music every day; in other words, while I work as a composer five days a week, the act of composing is not necessarily every day, unlike brushing teeth and eating breakfast. However, between 1994 and 2008, composition was everyday to me because it was my profession, a full-time occupation. Differing from brushing teeth, eating breakfast, driving or walking, the *mise en scène* of composing music took up almost all the energy of my conscious state. That is, composing was my only preoccupation aside from the disciplines of physical survival, such as eating, walking and breathing.

For a popular music composer like me, everyday creativity is a profession, involving training, ethics and formal recognition, at least in part. By which I mean, training points to the professional learning and internship of the skills required; ethics, the professional conduct to thrive in the industry; and formal recognition, what acknowledgement from the industry and stake holders in the habitus.

This section will attempt to locate and apprehend the hidden, precarious and ambiguous process of popular music composition in Malaysia, asking how and under what conditions a composer like me assembles and treats material, and in so doing earns a certain professional reputation. This will bring to view and demystify the everyday practice that hovers within the realms of composition practice. I shall further draw on the writings of de Certeau, arguing that the everyday is ‘an ensemble of practices’, ‘phenomenal and sensual’, ‘an aesthetic realm that requires attention to the style and poetics of living’ (p.151, Highmore 2002). And that, similarly, popular music composition practice, at

least in Malaysia, requires and deserves attention to judgements of taste and value – a twin to the poetics of everyday life.

I want to position my approach in *thick description* (Geertz, 1973), discussing everyday practices of musical composition that date from the start of my professional career in 1993. From 1993 to 2008, I was serving the needs of the popular strand of live and recorded music at Orkestra Radio TV Malaysia, at the studio where I work every day.

1.5.2 Every Day

In terms of professional music practices, what does the practitioner / composer do every day? Aiming at a certain 'thickness' of description, in line with an autoethnographic method, I recorded the following statement on 20 July 2015**:**

'One of the things I did every working day, five days a week, when I was working with Orkestra Radio TV Malaysia, is that I clocked in at 8.30 in the morning and I clocked out at 4.30 in the afternoon. That was one of the most important deliverables in order that I received my monthly salary. When I questioned the rationale for this procedure in 1995, the orchestra manager told me that the human resource department of the Ministry of Information responsible for Orkestra RTM implemented this clocking system across the board, applying it even to the secretary-general of the Ministry. I didn't argue about it then, but I wondered if there were better ways to gauge performance and discipline than clocking in and clocking out. As a musician and a composer, the deliverable is not being physically in the office, but delivering work that serves the needs of programmes. I hear the Orkestra musicians still have to clock in and clock out today.

The first thing when I got into the orchestra's office, I would look on my table to see if there were cassette tapes and pieces of paper instruction left for my immediate action. These cassette tapes, which changed to CDs at one point later and now to online resources, would contain the audio material that I needed to deal with, such that it fitted the purpose of the function or programme that requested it. Normally, the orchestra would have been notified of the imminent function or programme that required our service. In other words, I would be looking out for the assignments – they were usually not a surprise assignment. There were about five or six in-house composers with the orchestra, and I would be writing only one or two pieces for any one function or programme. That is, in each function or programme, multiple composers contribute to the soundscape. The producer decides the look and feel of the function or programme.

On the instruction pages, I would get information on the ensemble line-up, singers or soloists, and the composition due date. Depending on the ensemble line-up, I would decide the deliverable: if only a combo rhythm section was playing then I needed to produce only a "lead sheet"[16] *containing shorthand-like symbols giving music instructions to the musicians. The symbols included chord changes, tempo or metronome markings, rhythmic figures including "kicks", vocal cues and all other written instructions, acting like a hidden conductor on the sheet. Often, I would be performing in the function or programme, making detailed instructions seem unnecessary: well, musicians could simply ask me if they didn't understand what I had written on the page.*

[16] Wikipedia contributors (2015). Lead sheet. *Wikipedia*. Available from: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lead_sheet [accessed 8 January 2015].

Nevertheless, a good lead sheet, one that musicians respect and perform with intent, is one that includes as much information and instruction as possible, and is written legibly in good handwriting. Even in this age of computer-aided music notation processing, a lead sheet leaves much to be desired if the page formatting does not adhere to conventional layout. I'd argue that the page formatting in the "Real Book" series sets the benchmark for a good lead sheet.[17]

If the ensemble was larger, and the parts needed to be written out, then I would write on an orchestral manuscript. Now that we use Sibelius – a computer aided notation-processing program – I find the act of creating the page set-up is the same as when it was handwritten. Incidentally, past experience in using score templates in the Sibelius program moved me to set up the page manually. The built-in template often causes problems when it extracts parts – transposition and octaves are not always consistent. As a result, it takes up to twenty minutes to set up the master score layout alone, if the ensemble is big.

After I had set up the score page, I would listen to the audio material that was assigned to me. It might be a recording of a vocal piece but I was to compose an instrumental version, or it could be a male singer version but I was to compose it for a female singer. In other words, rarely did I get the music handed to me in the "final" version – first, I had to transcribe it, then I had to 'treat' it so that the final product served the purpose of the function or programme. Before I describe the process of "treatment" in the following

[17] Real Book is a book compilation of up to 500 pieces, including melody and chords, that serves the needs of working musicians in their gigs. See Wikipedia contributors (2015). Real book. *Wikipedia*. Available from: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Real_Book [accessed 10 August 2004].

paragraphs, I must say that transcribing a piece of music is an expertise that requires listening skill, understanding of the related music tradition, and music notation literacy. By this I mean I must be able to identify the pitches – melody and harmonic changes – and the rhythms, then recognise the structure or form of the piece, and finally be able to accurately transform what I hear into music notation.

Then, when the musicians got the parts, I would turn up, at least at the first rehearsal, so musicians could ask me any questions they might have. Now, the Sibelius program helps a lot with sounding the notes I have written, so I will have corrected the mistakes before the writing goes to print. Twenty years ago, when composers were still writing music on paper, it was most helpful if they turned up during the first rehearsal, as 'spelling mistakes' were rather common. If the composers didn't turn up, then the conductor or the bandleader would decide on behalf of the composer.

Returning to the audio material at hand, I will listen to it at least a few times, each time making additions on the lead sheet I have started to write. First, I identify the key, the time signature, then the tempo. Then, I start transcribing the melody, then the harmonic changes or the chord progression, in the process marking the sections with rehearsal letters. I need to start with the aid of a keyboard instrument or a tuning fork, as I do not have 'perfect pitch' to anchor me at a certain tone centre. After I have identified the key centre, I can generally identify melodies and chord progression by solfeggio.

After I have laid out the melody and chord changes, I will by and large make a note of the texture and the 'arrangement' of the piece: where the vocal starts, where the climax is, where the rhythmic 'breaks' are, key changes, what

sections are repeated and what differences there are within the repeats, and other notable 'soundmarks'.[18] *By then, I am broadly familiar with the piece of music I am assigned to write, I would then continue to orchestrate the pieces as required. Depending on how much time I have until the deadline, I would sometimes take the initiative to re-arrange the pieces so they sound 'new', instead of simply transcribing it from the recordings, only notating them for the orchestra. That is, as a composer or an orchestra arranger, I think we have the duty to compose something that is better than the original recording for the orchestra to play'.*

The above statement describes the skills I need to master in order to complete the assignments professionally. The description above has also given details of the music composition skills involved in preparing an orchestra score for performance and recording purposes. In addition to preparing the master score and orchestral parts, I need to have the expertise in rehearsing the orchestra, or, at the least, communicating with the orchestra conductor on the matter of the pieces.

I argue that all the above activities fit empirically, albeit notionally, what de Certeau writes about: these everyday activities are 'an ensemble of practices' – the different composition skills that are inextricably connected; they are 'phenomenal and sensual' – the process and the outcome of the composition and rehearsal practice that gratify the senses; and they are 'an aesthetic realm that requires attention to the style and poetics of living' – the

[18] I use the term 'soundmark' simply to mean a sonic landmark. This is different from the term used in soundscape studies to refer to a community sound that is unique, or possesses qualities that make it especially regarded or noticed by the people in that community.

everyday professional practice that finds itself into a doctoral study and dissertation.

In the following sections, I present two case studies that provides an up-close, in depth and detailed examination of the professional context in Malaysia, aiming to provide an account of the everyday professional practice through my personal and professional lens.

1.6 Case Study: KONSERT RAJA & RAKYAT BERPISAH TIADA

This is a case study of a royal concert where I was involved as a composer and the piano player in the orchestra. I had orchestrated the tune *Joget Pahang* for performance in this concert, and I find it to be significant that I would write this tune again in Kuala Lumpur shortly after my return from London. This case study will give the readers a glimpse of the professional context that I continue to work in.

1.6.1 Background information to the Concert

Selected Malaysians are awarded 'Datuk', 'Tan Sri', 'Tun' and other variants of these titles when they have contributed significantly to the people, society and nation of Malaysia. These may be awarded by the federal government, or by heads of state, Sultans or state governors during celebrations of their official birthdays. The state of Pahang on the east coast of the Malayan peninsula is among the larger states of Malaysia, and its Sultan has been awarding 'Dato'[19] honours to popular entertainers for several

[19] 'Dato', a variant of 'Datuk', is awarded by Sultan or Raja of states and by the Chief of state in Penang; while 'Datuk', is awarded by His Royal Highness *Agong*, the Chief of state in Melaka, Sabah dan Sarawak. 'Datuk' literally means 'grandfather', pointing to a respected senior person in the society.

decades. In conjunction with the Pahang Sultan's royal birthday celebration in 2016, all recording artists who had received 'Dato' awards from the Pahang Palace (*Istana Abu Bakar Pekan*) were invited to perform in a major concert at Istana Budaya (literally 'the Palace of Culture', which is a venue like the national theatre).

Figure 1.5: *Konsert Raja & Rakyat Berpisah Tiada* (Source: personal FaceBook page)

I was hired to play piano and synthesizer-keyboard, and to write orchestral arrangements for the concert. Preparation at Istana Budaya and orchestral rehearsals started five days before the show itself, and the show took place on 27 February 2016, in the evening after Maghrib prayer.

1.6.2 The Birthday Celebration of the Sultan

In the following paragraphs, I shall describe and discuss the show with the aim of supporting and problematising the arguments of everyday practice and professional context for my portfolio submission.

The organiser, *Luhur Nurani* (literally, 'the conscience') had invited Orkestra Simfoni Kebangsaan (OSK), literally the National Symphony Orchestra, to accompany the recording artists singing in the concert. There is a general perception in Malaysia that a concert performance is particularly prestigious if an orchestra accompanies the show. Complete with orchestra, the concert was to take place at Istana Budaya, one of two prestigious concert halls in Kuala Lumpur and the home of OSK. The title or theme of the royal concert was '*Raja & Rakyat Berpisah Tiada*', literally meaning 'the monarch and the people will never separate', and selected popular Malaysian and Indonesian entertainers who had received awards from the Pahang palace were chosen to perform in this concert.

Arguably, these constructions and connections of royal symbols and meanings were deliberate, aiming to increase the credentials and prestige of the Pahang Sultan's official birthday celebrations. In turn, these celebrations were expected to reinforce the legitimacy of the royalty.

An exhibition held at the lobby of Istana Budaya provided snapshots of the 85-year life of the Pahang monarch. This four-day exhibition culminated in the royal concert in the evening, when the monarch arrived to grace the occasion. Replicas of personal memorabilia, including the monarch's national registration card, photos of school activities, and video representations of his numerous visits to public functions intentionally portrayed the Pahang Sultan as the people's monarch, thereby enacting the theme and the promise that the monarch and the people will never separate. Moreover, the visual display and video communications in the exhibition repeatedly reinforced the legitimacy of the Pahang Sultan's royalty, the power of the historical grandeur and

institutional apparatus of the nation state, and the continuing patronage of the palace in the state of Pahang.

Against this background of exhibitionism,[20] it is clear that the Pahang Sultan is a symbolic figure, in that he only represents the state of Pahang and has no executive power. He is the head of Islamic religious affairs in the State, and he has to endorse state-level appointments recommended by the state and federal government. In the special newspaper inserts published by *The Star* in conjunction with his official birthday celebrations, the highlights were about industry, education, organisations, places of interest, food and cultural activities in the state, and much less about the human story of the sultan.

1.6.3 The orchestral line-up and Istana Budaya

Istana Budaya is one of the bigger agencies under the Ministry of Culture, now known as the Ministry of Tourism and Culture (www.motac.gov.my), with a mandate to promote national performing arts. Theatre productions, music concerts and dance shows make up the programmes at Istana Budaya, with occasional international franchise programmes such as *Shrek the Musical* or concert performances by the Japanese musician, Kitaro or the popular pianist, Richard Clayderman. In addition to stage performances, Istana Budaya hosts the *Permata Seni* (literally the 'Jewels of Arts') programmes, where talented children and youths are trained to dance, sing in choirs and play musical instruments. When these programmes were first introduced, only children living in and around Kuala

[20] Here I borrow the term from the 'Exhibitionism: the Rolling Stones' exhibition at the Saatchi Gallery, London, held from April to September 2016. I find similarities here, in that both the Rolling Stones and the Pahang Sultan's birthday exhibitions were only about exhibition, each doing much the same thing on a different scale.

Lumpur had access to these training opportunities. It is not clear whether young people living in other states now have access to these professionally-run programmes in their own states.

There are two formal orchestras based at Istana Budaya, the OSK and the Orkestra Tradisional Malaysia (OTM). OSK has 40 full-time musicians, with an administrative support staff of 15. The full-time musicians have to clock in daily, five days a week, fulfilling a forty-five-hour-a-week attendance obligation. Mr Mustafa Fuzer Nawi is the resident conductor at OSK. He received his professional music training in the early 1990s in Germany, as he was selected to receive a Malaysian government studentship based on his outstanding talent in violin performance. The Malaysian government, via the Ministry of Culture, had the ambition of cultivating Western music talent as part of the plan to develop the musical culture of the nation. Apart from the conductor, many of the section principals, including the principal cello and principal trombone, received conservatory training outside Malaysia. Over the last ten years, graduates from Yong Siew Toh Conservatory, University of Singapore and other music conservatories worldwide have also been recruited into OSK, nurturing the orchestra with more professionally-trained musicians. In other words, unlike the 1970s and 1980s, when musicians were self-taught or learned by ear, OSK can now perform better *tutti* passages very much in style, staying close to the tradition of the symphonic repertoire.

Figure 1.6: Orkestra Simfoni Kebangsaan, led by Mr Mustafa Fuzer Nawi (Source: http://www.istanabudaya.gov.my/artis-dan-produksi/artis-penggiat-seni/artis-residen/orkestra-simfoni-kebangsaan-osk/)

Nevertheless, OSK is experiencing an identity crisis, not unlike the Malaysian Philharmonic Orchestra (MPO), the second full size symphony orchestra in Kuala Lumpur.

Mr Lim Guan-Eng, a member of parliament from an opposition party and Chief Minister of Penang State, questioned in parliament why the large sum of RM500 million had been spent on MPO over the ten years since its inception in 1998 (jelas.info, 2008). Joined by other dissenting voices, Lim wanted the money spent on infrastructure and education. He pointed out that, since 95 per cent of full-time musician-members in MPO are non-Malaysians, it is safe to presume that all the money is remitted out of the country. Plans for knowledge transfer, including setting up an MPO academy where expatriate musicians would teach Malaysian musicians, have never taken off. Until recently, the Malaysian Philharmonic Youth Orchestra (MPYO) met only twice a year, and I would judge its results to have been far from satisfactory. Orchestral compositions by Malaysians or in Malaysia are few and far between, and local

music practitioners, either traditional, Western or modern, are seldom involved with the MPO or the concert hall, Dewan Filharmonik Petronas. Lim asked how petrodollars could be used in such a haphazard way.

Against this MPO background, why would the Malaysian government continue to pay large sums of money, via OSK, to promote the music of Bach, Beethoven, or Brahms; or Dvorak, Tchaikovsky, Rimsky-Korsakov or Bizet? With a partial mandate from the Ministry of Culture in a relatively new nation like Malaysia, what is the cultural value being advocated in the promotion of OSK? When there is only one symphony orchestra in India,[21] which reached a population of 1.32 billion in 2016,[22] why would a comparatively small nation like Malaysia with a population of only 30 million need two symphony orchestras in the capital?[23] What can OSK offer to the people that would justify the financial resources channelled into its maintenance? With all those questions unanswered, the management at Istana Budaya has not presented any Western classical concerts by OSK in the past five years, employing it only as a pit orchestra for various stage productions.

The other orchestra based at Istana Budaya is OTM, the line-up of which comprises traditional Malaysian instruments. The steering committee members who set up the orchestra were inspired by Korean government efforts to promote traditional Korean instruments on a large scale, evident in the international promotion of the Traditional Music Orchestra of the Korean Broadcasting System (KBS), and the popular activities of the ASEAN-Korea

[21] The only symphony orchestra in India is the Symphony Orchestra of India (SOI). Formed in 2006, it is based at the National Centre of Performing Arts in Mumbai.
[22] Source: http://www.worldometers.info/world-population/india-population/.
[23] Source: http://countrymeters.info/en/Malaysia.

Traditional Orchestra. The Malaysian steering committee seems to have found in the Korean model a blueprint for developing a national musical awareness; hence, the birth and growth of OTM.

Non-Western instruments, such as *sape*, *gambus*, sitar, *yang qin*, *di zi*, *bansuri*, *erhu*, *zhong ruan*, *pipa*, gamelan, *caklempong*, *serunai*, *suona*, accordion, *tabla* and *gendang*, form the main instrumental line-up of OTM. This line-up represents the multiple cultural traditions in Malaysia by selecting and displaying the most prominent instruments and players of each tradition, putting them together and making them sound united.

In addition, electronic instruments, such as keyboard synthesizers, electronic piano, electric bass, drum set and guitars, are usually included at some point in the line-up. Occasionally, violins, violas and cellos are also included, replaced by a single keyboard synthesizer when the budget limits the hiring of many ensemble musicians.

Since its inaugural performance in 2010, OTM has been involved in performances of various genres, including popular music from the 1960s' '*pop yeh yeh*' concerts on university campuses, and acting as accompanying orchestra for concerts by popular artists. While '*pop yeh yeh*' was basically rock 'n' roll sung in Malay, with its electric lead guitar, rhythm guitar and heavy back beat on snare drum, OTM managed to incorporate the sounds of traditional instruments into the '*pop yeh yeh*' songs without disrupting their structure or aesthetics. Similarly, when OTM accompanied Jamal Abdillah and Dato Siti Nurhaliza, two top entertainers in Malaysia, the timbre of traditional instruments added exotic novelty to their concert presentation.

Compared with OSK, over the last five years, OTM seems to have organised more concerts and to have given more performances in collaboration with various parties. This is arguably because OTM is politically well-positioned: it is deemed to be promoting national music and national culture, and is therefore deserving of public funding. While this simplified analysis leaves much to be problematised and argued, it clearly points to how the authorities politicise musical instruments as well as orchestras in their nation-building agenda.

Music is not just music: it is a propaganda tool; it is a platform for display of racial compositions and social roles; and it is stylised to serve as a tourist attraction. The national day parade of the '*Citrawarna*' procession, and this '*Konsert Raja & Rakyat Tiada Berpisah*' are strong examples of such constructed syncretic national music. For the expert practitioner to be involved in these events, it points to the practitioner's acceptance of compromise[24], accompanied by her or his attempt to make-do with the conditions imposed by the nature of the event and those who organised it. For the practitioner, it is necessarily a bricolage, even if it is a matter of a top-down organisation and performance of cultural uniformity.

1.6.4 The seven singer artists

In his congratulatory message in the souvenir programme, the prime minister of Malaysia highlighted that this concert was an effort to strengthen the relationship between the Sultan and his people in Pahang state. He also pointed out that the singers performing in this concert were of many religions,

[24] The feeling of compromise emerges only if one does not agree with the agenda.

races and nations. In addition to Dato' Siti Nurhaliza, Dato' Yusni Hamid, Dato' Hatta and Dato' Jamal Abdillah, who are Malay Muslims, Dato' David Arumugam is of Indian descent and non-Muslim, and Dato' Leonard Tan is of Chinese descent and non-Muslim. Dato' Rosa, on the other hand, is from Indonesia and is still based in Indonesia. Some information about the singers' backgrounds is provided in the following paragraphs, in order to show how these singers were selected for Pahang state awards carrying the title 'Dato', what these awards mean to the singers, and how this evidence connects with my argument on judgements of taste and value in my portfolio.

Dato' Siti Nurhaliza binti Tarudin (b. 1979)

Figure 1.7: Siti Nurhaliza (Source: www.themalaymailonline.com)

Dato' Siti Nurhaliza was the most prominent singers in the concert, in terms of highest numbers of album sales and entertainment industry awards won. Since 1997, when her professional career began, she has sung on sixteen award-winning albums, two duet albums, ten 'live' albums, scores of compilation and video albums, and numerous live shows and entertainment programmes. She

has also represented Malaysia in ASEAN programmes and Asian talent shows, and has performed in solo concerts at the Royal Albert Hall, London (2005), at Alumbra, Australia (2010), and at the Esplanade Theatre and other venues in Singapore (2000, 2005, 2008, 2010, 2014), and has been on tour in Indonesia (2004) and in Brunei (2002). She was made 'Dato' after receiving the title of *Darjah Indera Mahkota Pahang* in 2006.

In this concert, Siti Nurhaliza sang the well-known *Tari Tualang Tiga* and *Joget Pahang* as the opening tune, and shared the stage with all the artists in the closing tune, singing *Mencintai Mu* (*Loving You*), an Indonesian song extremely popular in Malaysia. In my view, this tune can be interpreted as a declaration of love to the Sultan of Pahang, albeit a constructed one.

At the beginning of this section, I mentioned that I wrote the orchestral accompaniment for Siti Nurhaliza singing *Joget Pahang* in this concert, and had also written *Joget Pahang* as part of a live recording of *Simfonika 1Malaysia* in October 2012 at The Grove, Middlesex University, nearly four years previously. However, the two recordings sound rather different. The UK version is instrumental, while this Istana Budaya version was sung; there is a long motif development section in the UK version, while this version was adapted for opening dance choreography and opening gambit. The orchestral line-up was also different, in that there were no traditional instruments in the Istana Budaya orchestra.

However, at the proverbial eleventh hour I added Malaysian traditional percussion *rebana, gong* and *maruas* to render 'Malay-ness' specifically for such an opening item. Although I already had a drum set and percussion in the orchestral line-up, I initially debated whether to use the *rebana*. However, I

wanted to hear the sound of *rebana* and *gong* in *Joget Pahang*, and I needed the vibrant and festive sound of *maruas* for the Sultan's procession into the hall. These sounds had become an inseparable part of the tune and the significance of its reception, and I would have been very reluctant to compromise. This tactic - it was made late in the process but shows how an expert practitioner can intervene in order to introduce change in a public arena, without the need for a planned, strategic intervention - provides a clear instance of 'making-do' that nonetheless operates at the level of public influence.

Dato' Yusni Hamid (b. 1956)

Dato' Yusni is often dubbed as 'the royal singer' because she has sung frequently in nearly all the palaces in Malaysia, Singapore and Brunei. She is sought after for her mellow and controlled vocal style. She is mature, poised and elegant, singing tunes that are in slow or moderate tempo, and she seldom dances or moves dramatically on stage. This meets the taste and requirements of the monarchs very well, and she has made a decent living from singing in royal birthday celebrations and other royal functions. She also conducts herself without fear or favour when other more popular singers are invited to perform in the same function. She is simply revered as the senior singing artist, and her seniority carries considerable weight in a society like Malaysia.

She has not had any award-winning or best-selling albums. She is simply a singer who sings live, and her repertoire covers the bulk of the Malaysian canon.

Dato' David Arumugam (b. 1950) and Alleycats

Dato' David Arumugam on the other hand, has been a best-selling recording artist since the early 1970s. His group, Alleycats, has made 27 albums to date, some of which had gone platinum, with many songs becoming an important part of the Malaysian canon. Alleycats appeal to all races in Malaysia: the lead singers are ethnic Indian, the bass player and drummer are ethnic Chinese and the guitarist is Malay. During their heyday, they appeared on nearly all televised entertainment programmes, and they now perform in national celebrations and festive concerts and on other commercial platforms. I argue that by singing tunes that appeal to the Malaysian public and engaging in live performances that always garner mass appeal, the band has become a 'mouthpiece' for multiracial, multi-religious Malaysia. Alleycats' performances have fed into new expressions of national identity for a large proportion of Malaysians, who have shown their preference for this music and the band's performances. This has become a non-discursive form of popular understanding that 'we just know' – that is, it is naturalised and arguably 'everyday'.

Figure 1.8: Alleycats in the 70s. David Arumugam is standing in the middle (Source: dinskords.blogspot.com)

For this concert, I wrote an orchestral arrangement for Dato' David to sing with the accompaniment of OSK. The Alleycats band did not perform in this royal concert, as only Dato' David had been awarded the 'Dato', not the other members of the band. He sang *Sekuntum Mawar Merah Sebuah Puisi* (*A Red Rose and a Poem*) and *Sampaikan Salam* (*Send my Regards*), both top hits by the group. I found it particularly difficult to write the orchestral accompaniment to these two tunes, because I was reluctant and somehow I was resistant to changing the recorded music arrangements, so in the end I made only minimal changes. I removed the drum set from the line-up and used only percussion to mark the tempo lightly. I added a lot more woodwind sounds to the orchestration, and I inserted some rhythmic 'breaks' in the tune to disrupt the continuous 'beats', which nevertheless would also propel the tune forward.

In the one instance where I used a different chord from the Alleycats' recorded version, resulting in a 'C' note with an A7 chord, my fellow musicians

asked me to change it back to the original C chord, and I duly complied. I did not explain that I was trying to create a different sound as an accompaniment to the very popular tune; I understood that other professionals considered this to be strategically inappropriate under these circumstances.

In the theoretical framework that I have established for this study, what I take to be more conventional judgements of taste and value won out, but they did so with my clear agreement as to the importance of compromise in certain instances within the professional domain. The *critical*-theoretical may have little role to play in certain expert-practitioner decisions, whereas some such apparently conventional creative decisions can be better understood through the theoretical notion of making-do. In my view, what de Certeau offers us here is a different way of understanding the Malaysian professional decision-making, within the public sphere.

Dato' Rossa (b. 1978)

Dato' Rossa was the only non-Malaysian artist in the concert. She is Indonesian and is based in Jakarta. Nevertheless, she is well-known in Malaysia for her series of chart-topping recordings in Malaysia and Singapore, including *Atas nama cinta* (*Over the Cause of Love*), *Ayat-ayat cinta* (*Declaration of Love*), *Hati yang kau sakiti* (*The Heart that You Have Hurt*) and *Aku bukanlah untuk mu* (*I Am Not for You*), all of which are love songs. Her second compilation album, *The Best of Rossa*, ranked tenth on the list of Indonesian all-time best-selling albums. She gained considerable exposure in Malaysia when she won the *Anugerah Industri Muzik Malaysia* (Malaysia Music Industry Awards) in 2008, 2009 and 2012, and she performed in sell-out concerts in Kuala Lumpur during that period. Her good looks and love-themed songs in the pop and rock

genre have garnered huge followings in the Malay-speaking world, including Brunei.

Dato' Hattan (b. 1964)

Dato' Hattan gained fame in the late 1980s when he broke out of the rock group *FRU* and went solo. Since the early 1990s, he has recorded eleven solo studio albums, from which he sang one of the top hits, *Dari Kekasih Kepada Kekasih* (*From Lover to Lover*) in this concert. He performed in the generic pop-rock style with lots of electric guitar, even though the OSK was the accompanying orchestra. Therefore, the colours of a Western symphony orchestra were not exploited to their full extent. Nevertheless, he received a good response, as his tunes are typical of the genre and the audience was comfortable with the music and the performance.

Dato' Leonard Tan (b. 1964)

Leonard was the only ethnic Chinese Malaysian artist-singer in this concert. Together with David Arumugam, he fulfilled the non-Malay quota in the line-up[25]. In this concert, he sang *Fly Me to the Moon* and *What a Wonderful World*, two standard American tunes, which received roaring applause. I argue that this is because these two tunes are the only English language tunes in the concert, and these two tunes are well-known among the older Malaysians[26]. Leonard is famous for his impersonation of Louis Armstrong, frequently singing *What a Wonderful World* in the signature voice, in one case to advertise properties for sale in Malaysia. He recorded an album that achieved reasonable

[25] There is an unspoken rule that minority races such as Malaysian Chinese or Malaysian Indian performers must be represented in every major concert or show.
[26] Compared to the younger generations today, the older Malaysians having had lived through the early days of independence from the British, know a lot more songs in the English language.

sales, with the tune *Bintang Bukannya Satu* (*There is More than One Star*) staying in the chart for a year. In addition to producing advertising jingles, he designs and produces live shows that include short clips of familiar songs interspersed with jokes and anecdotes, which are well-received at corporate functions and family day events.

Dato' Jamal Abdillah (b. 1959)

Jamal has a reputation for being a drug-addict artist-singer. He has a voice that is described as '*lemak*', literally 'oily' or 'fatty', meaning smooth, thick and milky. In the 1980s, he acted in a number of movie blockbusters and sang the title tunes, all of which became best-selling hits. He is musically educated; that is, he plays the piano well, and easily adapts to orchestral arrangements or re-arrangements of his popular tunes. In this concert, he sang his evergreen *Kekasih Awal & Akhir* (The First and Last Lover) and *Gadis Melayu* (Malay Girl), both box-office hits from the 1980s that are inextricably connected with him, his image, and his voice. He continues to be in demand today, even though he has not recorded any new work in the last decades or so. Popular taste, from this perspective, at least for certain generations, is nostalgic, and characterised by repetition.

1.6.5 Discussion

In light of the report of the royal concert above, I aim to trace judgements of taste and value in my work back to the description of a professional context and its everyday practice. I risk over-simplification in trying to reflect, critically or otherwise, on judgements of taste and value in a brief description of a single concert. Nevertheless, this account does point to the complexity and perplexing multiple interests and corresponding tensions of the field, and how these

structural tensions affect, and even dictate, creative decisions. In this concert, the venue operators, policy makers, producers, composers, musicians, singers and dancers each played a role in balancing competing pressures. By looking further into ideas for the concert programme, the repertoire, the venue, the orchestra, the performance improvisation and audience reflexivity, it may be possible to map out the external 'structure' of my judgements of taste and value. These kinds of concert are evidently not only the major activities in my professional career, but they also contribute significantly to my income. That is, my judgements of taste and value are socially and spatially regulated to varying extents, and my intellectual faculties are secondary attributes 'rooted in practical and pre-reflexive habits and skills' (Crossley, 2001, p.62).

Certain modes of social performance, in this case the royal concert, are subject to controls that minimise the potential for improvisation and attempt to reduce ambiguity (Edensor, 2000, 2001). This was marked by the selection of singer-artists who had received royal decorations, the situation of the concert venue, the exhibition in the lobby area, the concert programming and the invited audience. Consequently, the celebration and reproduction of social ideals and conventions that demand stylised, disciplined and perhaps repetitive performances become part of 'social habit memory' (Connerton, 1989). This mnemonic effect has arguably given me an affective yet disciplined sense of belonging, which enables me successfully to compose, conduct and record work in my practice portfolio which I can even specifically continue in the future.

While Connerton (1989, p.102) argues that national rituals, like a royal concert, require no further questioning, providing 'insurance against the process of cumulative questioning entailed in all discursive practices', I concur

with Edensor (2002, p.74) that 'such rituals are performed in a unreflexive manner … they are not discursively (re)constituted but performed through embodied memory', particularly in relation to the everyday performers of the ritual.

I argue that although I was composing in London, 10,500 km away from home, I am bound by artistic 'memory' and 'identity' incorporated thus far, a result of after twenty years of everyday professional practice organised or informed by a specific professional context. Hence, these judgements of taste and value are transmitted and reproduced in my portfolio, which has the quality of de Certeau's *bricolage* (p.29): it is 'cobbled together', from heterogeneous strategic and tactical engagements and interventions as has been the case for many of the cultural events and performance makers whose work I have reviewed in these pages, whether or not the participants were in a position to identify it as such.

The following exegesis of *Simfonika 1Malaysia* written in 2013, at the point of composition and production in London, broadly reverberates through the arguments outlined above.

1.7 Case Study: 'Simfonika 1Malaysia'

'*Simfonika 1Malaysia*' was recorded in London at the Middlesex University campus at the end of 2012. While '*Simfonika 1Malaysia'* precedes the earlier case study of the royal concert, the two case studies are distinct in their own way. The first case study discusses the professional context in Malaysia whilst this study is about the composition practice while I was in London studying for the doctoral degree. It is therefore appropriate to discuss this case study as the final section in Chapter 1, as it acts as a precursor to Chapter 2 which is

dedicated to the exegesis of the compositions, all of which were composed during my stay in the UK.

This set of work includes five pieces based on the tunes of *Joget Pahang* (the same tune that is also composed in *Konsert DiRaja Rakyat Tiada Berpisah)*, *Jambatan Tamparuli*, *Boria*, *Puteri Santubong* and *Endang*. The line-up of the chamber orchestra includes Western instruments from the string, woodwind and brass families, and the Malaysian traditional instruments of *bonang, sitar, sape, erhu, rebana, serunai, accordion* and *violin asli*. There is only one vocal piece in 'Simfonika 1Malaysia', the *Boria* piece, wherein the singer Mr. Noraihan composed contemporary lyrics for the occasion, singing about Malaysia – its development, its united, multi-racial population and culture, and the vision of a strong and developed country.

While local British musicians wore black shirts and blouses, the Malaysian musicians wore racially significant costumes according to the tradition of the instruments they played. That is, the *sape* player wore Iban costumes, the sitar player wore Indian, the *erhu* player wore Chinese clothes, and the *bonang, serunai, rebana* and accordion players wore Malay costumes. The TV studio at The Grove, Hendon campus of Middlesex University was back-dropped with a few pieces of four-metre *batik* hand-painted fabric hanging from the ceiling to the floor, creating an international atmosphere but one appropriate to Malaysian aesthetics and philosophy. With the help of the Film and TV faculties of both Middlesex University and ASWARA, I composed, conducted and made live recordings of the five pieces.

The Malaysian professional musicians travelled from Istana Budaya Kuala Lumpur to perform in a tourism promotional programme at Trafalgar

Square, London, and visited the Hendon campus to record the five pieces. All the tracks were recorded in one take, and the deputy High Commissioner of Malaysia to the UK and Northern Ireland, Mr Wan Zaidi Wan Abdullah attended with the Vice Chancellor of Middlesex University, observing the recording from the studio balcony, thereby serendipitously fulfilling the requirement for authenticity and audience participation in a 'live' recording, also somewhat legitimising the music through their distinguished status. All went well except that the clapping and cheering usually accompanying a performance were absent. Nevertheless, performers and production crew were aware that they were being watched by both human eyes and cameras, and they performed to the 'gaze'.

As in the photo of January and Siva discussed earlier, the visual narratives and expressions of *Simfonika 1Malaysia* are loaded with signifiers of '*campur*', of hybridity, of both multiculturalism and interculturalism. The effect of the music is at once exotic and recognisable, with deliberate use of Malaysian folk tunes and traditional instruments contributing to the 'nationalist' factor ('exotic' to Westerners), while the use of Western instruments and jazz / popular music stylistics reflect my American and UK music training. I invested in marketing a cultural authenticity that only Malaysians are able to retrieve, yet I imposed jazz / popular music sensibilities to achieve a 'commercial' sound.

While I have acquired the habit of combining Malaysian traditional instruments with Western instruments which started as a top-down political directive in Malaysia, this creative habit has gradually become a niche that forms a style – a style that continues to be popular globally, this merging of Western and non-Western styles.

This practice of creating music that is informed by clearly different traditions is sometimes referred to as acculturation in music. It implies 'processes of cultural contact between two or more distinct musical cultures that resulted in musical mixes or syncretisms' (Born and Hesmondhalgh, 2000). The power struggle between musical elements representing their various traditions seems to be conveniently collapsing into a genuine creative struggle. That is, politically dominant factors do not always dominate in music productions, as subordinate elements often stand out as 'exotic'. In other words, it seems to be a level playing field in the music creative process, with the composer agency making creative decisions based on every day skills and judgements of taste and value.

I find this theoretical understanding aptly explains my creative considerations when I was composing for 'Simfonika 1Malaysia'. I find that the 'subordinate elements often stand out as exotic' (Born and Hesmondhalgh, 2000) hence gaining equal footing in this creative struggle, because to be seen as exotic is arguably often an advantage in creating value.

In preparing to compose for this portfolio, particularly 'Simfonika 1Malaysia', I had studied the works of Tan Dun, Chou Wen-Chung, and Toru Takemitsu, these composers whose work are well known for combining the tradition of Western classical music and the sound of Eastern traditional instruments. It is not clear, nevertheless, how the influence from these composers is reflected in my compositions in this portfolio. I cannot clearly pin-point the influence, but I must acknowledge the inspirational experience and some *eureka* moments when I had come to understand what the composers

aim to do technically. If I can transfer these understandings to my subsequent compositions, it was not conscious and not deliberate.

Figure 1.9: Photograph taken during recording of *Simfonika 1Malaysia* (October 2012)

Figure 1.10 1Malaysia official logo

In the following sections, I continue to write about the political context of *Simfonika 1Malaysia,* the idea of authentic inauthenticity, and the 'grain' of the sound.

1.7.1 Politics, Commerce and Diaspora

> *Music synthesis as artistic production, contrary to the utopian ideal of art as autonomous and transcendent, is inseparable from and an integral part of politics and subject to social forces at large. Analysis of the music is meaningful and encompassing only when it is seen in light of the social imagination and power relationships that the composers encountered in producing their music as well as the dynamics of the world in which their music is received.*
> (Lau, 2004)

Najib Abdul Razak became Prime Minister of Malaysia shortly after the ruling party Barisan Nasional won by a simple majority in the 2008 general election, perceived to be a 'defeat' compared to all the two-third majority wins since gaining independence from the British in 1957. He subsequently launched the '1Malaysia' campaign in September 2010 to promote and stress ethnic harmony, national unity and efficient governance, with the various manifestations of '1Malaysia' campaign to include '*Kedai Rakyat 1Malaysia'* (1Malaysia Sundry Shop), '*Klinik Rakyat 1Malaysia*' (1Malayisia Clinic), 1Malaysia Foundation, 1Malaysia Youth Fund, and the impactful '*Bantuan Rakyat 1Malaysia*' (BR1M, a cash assistance for the hard-core poor).

I have always found the campaign 'attractive', wilfully ignoring the political implications, 'political correctness', actual implementation or public perception, and I find myself gladly supporting the notion of '1Malaysia' – I want 1Malaysia and all the values that it represents to become reality. And so when I have the opportunity to create a project for submission, I want to promote and

produce ‘Simfonika 1Malaysia’ – with the title ‘*simfonika*’ being the portmanteau of ‘*simfoni*’ (symphony) and ‘*anika*’ (diverse, different). Naturally, I also take advantage of the other meaning that ‘*satu Malaysia*’ could have – it means ‘the whole Malaysia’, which coincides with my intention of composing music sourced from the whole Malaysia, creating what it pleases me to view as a personal gift for the whole of Malaysia. I imagine that if I were given the opportunity, I shall select from each state a popular folk tune - usually a dance tune - to be the inspiration and source material for short concert pieces, each of which can be eventually edited into a 13-episode television travelogue program.

I also imagine that each episode as including archive material or new productions, encompassing chapters on local places of interest, food, handicrafts, games, fashion, literature, and my special composition will be a tribute to the individual state. Should the program become popular - therefore its broadcast being extended - more music, possibly by other composers, can be composed to garner a varied interest and followings, thereby extending the life span of the series. I expect this sort of program to draw sponsorship from brands of fast-moving consumer goods, therefore further production of the series can be financed, particularly the creation of new orchestral music.

Jocelyne Guilbault in her ‘World Music’ entry in *The Cambridge Companion to Pop and Rock* (2001) finds world music[27] practitioners ‘present themselves and are perceived as social and political activists, a role which they fulfil as a function of their activity as musicians and may also, on occasion,

[27]For the purpose of discussion here, I will broadly equate my work as world music, world popular music, as my professional work is produced outside of Euro-American centres.

adopt as an explicit personal objective' (p180). While it seems contradictory since I had been arguing about compromise in earlier section, I concur with Guilbault in terms at least of the notion of social agency, and argue that putting myself in the framework of world music practitioners – often closet nationalists or post-'colonial' activists – we are the 'cultural brokers', here borrowing the term from ethno-history such as in Szasz (2001).

By this I mean that we tend to be individuals who have acquired an understanding of more than one set of cultural/musical principles and who function as mediators between local and foreign cultural/musical groups in initiating dialogue (Everett, 2004). In composing cross-cultural work, we have steered politically towards promoting and preserving interests in traditional music and cultural values, while experimenting with fusion. Arguably, we are instrumental in the cross-cultural synthesis and we perform authorial agency (Hüdson, 2009) in shaping the course of the intercultural communication. In 'Simfonika 1Malaysia', arguably the visual, textual, and sonic manifestations are politically charged[28] – in turn, an obvious aesthetic informed by national identity continues to be invented and re-invented.

On 14th May 2012, when the Malaysian High Commissioner to the UK hosted a 'meet the Prime Minister' event at O2, I was responsible for providing entertainment during his guests' arrival, ceremonies and VIP departure. With British musicians making up the rest of the band, and singers from Malaysia and expatriates here, I presented a mix of traditional dance tunes, '*lagu rakyat*' (the people's tunes) and current hit tunes in Malaysia. My experience from the

[28] While this claim seems to be too strong as my work generally aims to please audiences and present cohesiveness, the sense of political charge is undeniable.

sixteen years of performing, composing, and producing patriotic campaign songs and music at Orkestra Radio Television Malaysia proved useful in the event – I noticed Malaysian guests, including students, high-commission staff, and expatriates, were all singing or humming along the tunes that were performed. They are familiar with the tunes, having learned them in schools or heard them over radio and television channels.

This music, familiar music that was blasted through radio and television in Malaysia, had become the trigger for nostalgia and perhaps an expression of patriotism. At some point during the music performance, tears were beginning to well in the eyes – mine included - and I believe this nostalgia or mild distress would not have arisen had this event taken place within Malaysia. It is the dislocation from home that exacerbates and invokes this deep and mostly hidden affection for the country.

Figure 1.11 I lead the band in accompanying the singing of '1Malaysia' signature tune, 14 May 2012, at O2, London

I propose to connect my experience of homesickness with my decision to promote 'Simfonika 1Malaysia' – had I had to produce a similar project while I am in Malaysia, it would probably have been less nationalistic, less 'post card-like', and possibly more popular / American in line with globalized popular music. This is because when I am in my home country, there is a lesser need to prove my patriotism, or to act patriotic. On the contrary, when in home country, I would probably want to show that my music has a global feel, that I am international.

This extended stay in the UK (2010-2013) is the third away from home in my life – first in Taiwan (1986-1990), then in the USA (1990-93), and the resulting emotional distress originating from homesickness has not improved over the years. I propose to argue that this patriotism and nostalgia for home forms a major motivation in my creative output, a condition not unlike that

experienced by earlier composers who subsequently produced idiosyncratic works – they include Grieg, Dvorak, Smetana, Bartok, Stravinsky, Glinka, Tan Dun, and Takemitsu in varying circumstances and manifestations[29]. I would continue to argue that my work therefore conforms to audience-orientated aesthetics as it is 'treated as a kind of commodity whose value is realized in the gratification of the listener' (Cook, p7) – here the well-versed listeners are Malaysians or closely related to Malaysia. Audiences and listeners within the Malaysian cultural context will find my work yields gratification - with a certain degree of meaningful or rewarding perceptual engagement – wherein I exploit a systematic invocation of nationalism.

In my portfolio, *Simfonika 1Malaysia* is the final set of compositions I had planned to execute. It serves as the closing, the finale to a portfolio in that it has the largest ensemble line up, involving chamber ensembles from both Malaysian tradition and the Western tradition. The Malaysian musicians travelled from Malaysia to perform with the professional London musicians, in London.

[29] For each composer's biography and output please refer to Oxford Music Online.

Figure 1.12 The Malaysian High Commissioner introduces me to the Prime Minister

1.7.2 'Folk' source: authentic inauthenticity

Figure 1.13 The 5 states from where I draw the folk songs material to compose the pieces: Pulau Pinang, Pahang, Negeri Sembilan, Sabah, and Sarawak

I know a lot of my native folk music by heart – often carrying involuntary memories, affective or nostalgic connections, and I am particularly interested in re-connecting with the local and the particular states in Malaysia by way of using their folk material in my compositions. Like Dvorak with *Symphony no 9* (1893), Aaron Copland with *Appalachian Spring* (1944), Bela Bartok with the collection of Hungarian, Slovakian, Bulgarian and Romanian folk songs (1904-1929), Luciano Berio with *Folksongs* (1964), or Michael Finnissy with *Folklore* (1998), I hope to be inspired and nourished by folk material, and in the process to take advantage of its quality and cult status[30] in order to benefit from immediate recognition and quick acceptance from the listeners.

On the other hand, Bruno Nettl points out that 'folk music is composed by individuals, but that subsequent to the original act of composition, many persons may make changes, thus in effect re-creating the song'. This process, called 'communal re-creation', is one of the things that distinguish folk music from other kinds (1983, p.14). I propose to concur with Nettl's findings and argue that the Malaysian folk material that I use in 'Simfonika 1Malaysia' not only shows traces of influence from China, India, Philippines and Indonesia (as shown in Fig 1.1, p.18), it also shows traces of syncretism, merging Asian and Western traditions. I argue that 'Simfonika 1Malaysia' is the manifestation of 'communal re-creation' and, in turn, that my work in the doctoral context may contribute to the canon of Malaysian folk music in orchestral format.

While I have not created 'new' folk songs – a nearly impossible aspiration, given the long traditions from which they emerge - the peripheral

[30] Here I mean the condition of being adored and worshipped by many people.

creative practitioners surrounding the music production will unearth different perspectives of these popular folk songs, thereafter hopefully generating further imaginative work.

This argument is especially valid when my work includes many passages of original material and other elements from other traditions – in other words, I have 'mixed-and-matched' (*bricoler*, in de Certeau 1984, p. 29) arguably disparate elements together in the firm belief that the result will satisfy audience and listeners across a significant part of social groupings, both in a Malaysian and European context. This critical judgment is based on 18 years of experience working in a broadcasting station orchestra responsible for producing popular music for mainstream consumption. As a result of this professional experience, I am able to judge what 'works' in these situations of mix-and-match, the *bricolage*; or not.

Guilbault (2001) has made another observation of features characteristic of world music which fit my professional practice. She finds that these transnational and transcultural interactions resulting from such practices revive certain local genres, and a new breed of entrepreneurs arises as they take advantage of the growing commercial popularity, locally or international' (p. 180). Reflecting on the composition of 'Simfonika 1Malaysia' reinforces Guilbault's observation above in many aspects – the transnational exchange between Malaysia and the UK in the recording studio, and the transcultural fertilization between ethnic Sarawak, Sabah, Chinese, Indian, Malay and European traditions - not only revive and promote these particular folk songs and the traditional instruments in use, but that they legitimize the social and political imaginaries and constructs involved. What I mean here is that, from

'Simfonika 1Malaysia' onwards, the piece *Puteri Santubong* will be repeatedly acknowledged to be from the state of Sarawak and *sape* is used in the piece for the very simple reason that it is a native Sarawak instrument, and it is played by an Iban[31] musician. This result resembles the 'revival of local genres' as described by Guilbault above, and I am the 'entrepreneur' who takes advantage of the growing commercial popularity.

It is against this background of transnational and transcultural action and intervention that Lawrence Grossberg's notion of *authentic inauthenticity* surfaces: First, I acknowledge that 'Simfonika 1Malaysia' is deliberately 'inauthentic' in that these folk tunes pre-exist and the production executives like the use of 'batik' (hand painted wax cloth) as TV studio set and ethnic costumes adorned by the musicians are constructed and staged. Next, I argue that the *mise-en-scène* is, nevertheless, authentic in that the music production, including composition, rehearsal, performance and recording, stay 'true' to my creative poetics – embedding my artistic signature – and this work is therefore singular while it is enriched with Malaysian cultural / musical markers[32].

I argue that my compositions in London during the years of 2010 – 2012 fit empirically the stated 'folk' and 'world' music aims above. First and foremost, I repeatedly return to folk sources for inspiration and creative material, a habit that I find I had acquired from working in the public institutions and serving the interest of nation building. And, I expect that as a result of my compositional direction, Malaysian folk song resources have the good potential to be either revived, or continued to be (re)-constructed. The set of compositions in

[31] Iban is one of the many indigenous tribes in Sarawak.
[32] As with Moore's dictum that authenticity is ascribed rather than inscribed, meaning that it is largely down to individual participants whether or not they view a piece of music as being authentic.

'Simfonika 1Malaysia' is an exemplary example, and *Lenggang Kangkung*, the third piece in the portfolio reinforced these understandings from Gilbault and Grossberg.

1.7.3 The 'Grain' of the Voice

Roland Barthes' perception of the voice as having a 'grain' (1977) is one of the best-known legacies of the later 20th Century history of ideas and I propose to map the 'grain' of the voice of Charles Panzéra to the 'grain' of the sound of 'Simfonika 1Malaysia' – 'the body of the voice as it sings', as Barthes describes it, and the unique timbre and flavour of the soundscape in 'Simfonika 1Malaysia' as a result of the strategic use of the traditional instruments juxtaposed with the instruments of the Western orchestra.

While I can point to the various Malaysian instruments involved and describe their associated traditions, I cannot illuminate the 'musico-poetic fabric' if I do not refer to the 'grain' of the soundscape contained therein. In *The Pleasure of Text*, Barthes (1975) explains how in capturing the sound of speech close-up, the cinema 'makes us hear in their materiality their sensuality, the breath, the gutturals, the fleshiness of the lips' (p.66-67). I argue, with this explanation in mind, that the TV studio recording of 'Simfonika 1Malaysia' – replete with close-ups of instruments and the players - provides the paradigm for such a glimpse into the soundscape. I maintain that the grain of 'Simfonika 1Malaysia' extends beyond sound into a combination of sound and visual factors, and the meta-textual level of significance can only be fully appreciated during the event itself. This constraint has significant implications for the ways many of us try – and largely fail - to document aesthetic practices adequately.

And so I argue that ‘Simfonika 1Malaysia’ as a product of politics, commerce, and diaspora with its inextricable connection with folk sources, identity formation and grain of soundscape standing in the realm of popular music, may find a niche for itself, a niche that is in fact based on authenticity – ‘an authenticity that has to be communicated through and through, from the choice of means to the end result’ (Czernowin, 2012, p.284). Just as Israeli composer Chaya Czernowin proposes, I shall proclaim, (re-)create and communicate the framework of the piece - its context - in every piece.

CONCLUSION

In Chapter 1, in line with an autoethnographic method, I have described and discussed the professional context of a popular music orchestral composer in Malaysia. I started with the general context in Malaysia, including the geographical influence, historical influence, and an overview of the popular music industry in Malaysia. I have also discussed the Malaysian taste for hybridity and multiculturalism (represented as *campur*), and how this preferred value is manifested in food, marriage and many facets of life in Malaysia.

From the discussion of the general situation in Malaysia, I move on to the discussion of my professional practice, framed within the discussion of everyday practice. I described the everyday routine of a full-time composer employed by the national broadcasting station, with an aim to highlight the professional skills required to deliver the assignments and the poetics of the everyday practice.

Towards the end, I complemented Chapter 1 with two case study reports that I was involved in as a composer and as a performer or orchestra conductor.

The first case study deals with the royal concert held in conjunction with the birthday celebration of the Sultan of Pahang state; and the second case study deals with the political and cultural context of the composition of ‘Simfonika 1Malaysia’.

That is, in the following Chapter 2, I aim to write about the selected four pieces included in the portfolio: its genesis, inspiration for composition, technique of composition, and the musicians who performed.

CHAPTER 2: PRACTICE PORTFOLIO: DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS

Introduction

Over three years from the beginning of 2010 to the end of 2012, I composed, presented in public and recorded a set of musical compositions with line-ups ranging from string quartet, jazz big band, Chinese orchestra and *gamelan* orchestra, to *pipa* plus string quartet, *gamelan* plus jazz big band, and *Simfonika 1Malaysia* – a hybrid line-up of Malaysian instruments and Western ensemble. With qualitative research methods in mind, this work was notated using the Western music notation system, translated for Malaysian and Chinese music notation where necessary, rehearsed and performed 'live' with session musicians in the UK and invited Malaysian instrumental soloists, and finally recorded on audio or video format for the purpose of submission as a research undertaking. The catalogue of the full list of compositions is shown in Appendix 6.

I designed the instrumental line-up systematically, starting with ensemble compositions for instruments of the same tradition – such as the string quartet of the European tradition, the *gamelan* ensemble of the Malaysian tradition, and the jazz big band of the jazz tradition, and culminating in hybrid ensembles, pairing *pipa* with string quartet, and *gamelan* with jazz big band. Finally, I combined a group of Malaysian traditional instruments, itself a combination of different traditions, with a Western chamber orchestra in *Simfonika 1Malaysia*, which is publicly available on YouTube. Jambatan Tamparuli is available at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tnYz3nGhjqs; Puteri Santubong at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rEOAn-RD-Oc; Joget Pahang at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t3wiQoPxeJw; Fantasia Endang

at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P99vfu_cGNM; and Boria at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p-c42cDeju0.

The aim of this design was to increase the level of compositional complexity and problematics as the research progressed, while maintaining the rigour of composition. That is, although the line-up of the ensemble might change, thus creating a platform for variations in timbre, texture and gesture, I sought to establish a 'constant' or common strand across the compositions in this portfolio. In this study, I aim to explore the question and meaning behind the 'constant', and the relationship between the variables and the constant.

Throughout the research process, I found that the 'constant' relates to the generous use of jazz informed harmony, memorable melodies, regular rhythm, standard song forms of AABA or variation of it, the sound of pentatonic scales, the employment of non-western traditional instruments and juxtaposing these instruments with western instruments.

This understanding of the compositions in my portfolio might usefully be reflected as part of a larger process of locating Malaysian judgements of taste and value[33] in music composition and consumption. In the context of this practice-based research, the notion of judgement of taste and value reflects how I make decisions in the process of composition. Particularly, how I understand the root of my taste for the timbre of the traditional instruments in the compositions, what I judge will serve the function of the compositions, and what values the compositions will have in the different context they are being

[33] My use of this term comes via P. Bourdieu (1977) and his *Outline of a Theory of Practice,* which is briefly discussed in Chapter 1, p.8.

performed and consumed. I will also explain how the questions of taste and value are reflected in my use of jazz idiom.

In Appendix 6 (p.135-36), I list the total compositional output during the three years of my study in London, serving as an overview of the journey of my doctoral studies.

From the total output, I have selected four pieces with increasing larger ensemble to be included in this submission portfolio:

1) '12356', a string quartet piece from the western tradition;

2) *Ti Oh Oh*, a Chinese ensemble piece based on a Taiwanese folk tune;

3) *Lenggang Kangkung*, a hybrid ensemble piece that combines the tradition of the Gamelan Melayu, and the American jazz big band; and

4) *Jambatan Tamparuli*, a larger hybrid ensemble piece that features the Malaysian traditional ensemble and a western chamber orchestra.

The selection criteria are based on the intention to include ensemble line up from both the Malaysian popular music tradition – where my professional context is; and from the western tradition – where I studied for my doctoral program and where these pieces were produced.

For each of the four pieces, I shall introduce the context of the composition, analyse the compositional techniques in the pieces, and discuss the personal inspiration and understanding of the compositional process of the pieces themselves. I argue that this writing fits the autoethnography method of research and writing discussed in the Introduction (p.8) in that the personal experience and understanding will now be externalised, and perhaps, academicized. I contend that the writing in this chapter, albeit personal and

reflective, will provide a nuanced and honest understanding of the complexity and unpredictability of the compositional process.

2.1 '12356 MDX'

'12356 MDX' was composed in 2010, within the first year of my arrival in London. The following exegesis, written at the point of composition and recording, broadly captures my creative inspiration and reflection as I was experiencing a music culture shock[34].

2.1.1 '12356 MDX' – an introduction

In a particular Chinese music notation system, numbers are used to represent the steps in the diatonic scale, and my use of '1', '2', '3', '5', and '6' to point to five pitches, *do re mi so la*, commonly called *pentatonic,* set out my composition principles in this string quartet piece. I have composed and recorded four movements for this piece: 12356 MDX, 12356 Adagio, 12356 Fugal, and 12356 Morph, each based on the use of pentatonic scales as the generative agent.

Relating to my Malaysian context, I had had learning and working experience with Chinese music notation system as I had studied in primary and secondary schools of Chinese medium where they taught music in Chinese music notation. Vocal and choir scores were written in numbers from 1 to 7, representing the solfeggio system of *do re mi fa so la ti do*. This system works only if the piece in question is tonal, and I find this system to be most useful

[34] When I was living in the US and studying at Berklee College of Music, I was studying and working on jazz music, rarely on European classical music. When I started studying in London, I 'found' European classical music, which turned out to be rather different from what I was familiar with earlier. Thus, a 'music culture shock'.

when the piece needs to be performed in another key. That is, the piece written in this notation system, can be easily performed in any key, in any tonal centre.

Musicologist Jacques Chailley and ethnomusicologist Bruno Nettl argue that pentatonicism may well be a musical universal while theorists like Hermann Helmholtz, Benjamin Suchoff and V. K. Trån also take its historical primitivism for granted. These arguments are reflected in the ubiquity of pentatonicism in the tradition of jazz music, Scottish music, British Isles, Ameridian America, Chinese music, Japanese music, and notable 19th century works from Carl Maria von Weber, Liszt, Chopin, Debussy, Dvorak, Puccini, Borodin, Mussorgsky, Rimsky Korsakov, Bartok, Mahler, Mendelssohn, Berlioz, Wagner, and Stravinsky, Hindemith, Vaughan Williams into the 20th century, a list that is necessarily selective.

It is against this pervasive pentatonicism that I set out to compose my first string quartet piece. While the flavour of pentatonic is relatively common, and it is standard music tonality, I set out to create a space for a 'difference' in this 'common' music. In other words, this piece generated by the ubiquitous pentatonic motif will nevertheless have a twist - a popular turn - that is informed by Malaysian popular traditions.

I am familiar with the sound of pentatonic scales, in their different formations. In the Malaysian music context, this pentatonic sound is relatively common – we find it in Chinese tunes, in the sounds of gamelan ensemble, and in some popular folk tunes. How do I make this pentatonic sounds different in the context of a string quartet line up? How do I make it sound 'popular' so it has the potential to meet the taste of the mainstream in the Malaysian context?

How do I create a sound on the string quartet that also meets my own judgement of taste and value?

2.1.2 String quartet

The string quartet line-up of two violins, one viola and one cello poses a certain challenge in that none are chordal, that is, each of these instruments, on its own, cannot hold a chord effectively although multiple stops combined with open strings can play up to four notes simultaneously[35]. This confronts a composer, like me, who is used to having chordal instruments like piano and guitar play the chords and therefore lay the harmonic background assertively. Plainly, I was researching for a Malaysian 'jazz popular' flavour that I can effectively frame, appropriate and transplant into the genre.

2.1.3 The 'Grain' of the String Quartet and Black & White Visuals

Figure 2.1 The Allegri Quartet (from www.allegriquartet.org.uk, accessed on 22 May 2013)

[35] Although somewhat unusual, it is possible and musical to play four notes on the violin, viola and cello simultaneously, combining notes on open and closed strings.

The flavour of the string quartet is monochromatic, in that it produces sounds of only the string instruments, mainly bowed and sometimes plucked. Extended techniques in the 20th century, partly a result of the avant-garde movement, include re-tuning the instrument, placement of the bow on the bridge, production of harmonics, use of the wooden part of the bow, use of different mutes, all of which are intended to develop different timbre from the instruments. Reflecting on the creative process of *12356*, I find that I can integrate these extended technique sounds into the composition, and I imagined I was taking grey scale photographs or sketching with pencils while composing, that is, without the luxury of colours but with the range of shades between black and white.

At the risk of sounding too reductive, I argue that string quartet compositions are, like black and white photography, perceived to be nostalgic, historic and anachronistic, in that the associations result in western classical connotations of the last centuries. This one-coloured limitation renders the work subdued and ironically, theatrical – with its subject matter enhanced by the stark contrast. Colour – of music or visuals - can therefore be a distraction that diverts attention from the building blocks of texture, tonal contrast, shape, form and lighting. In other words, while colourful photographs claim to 'depict' reality and grey scale photographs are 'interpretations' of reality, bands or orchestral music connect to popular culture like advertisement and movies and string quartet music to 'classical' establishments like concert hall or black-tie events.

Following this understanding of monochromatic limitations, I find the composition to be equally challenging compared to composition for a large

ensemble: the texture of this piece needs to be varied, or unified, globally over the four movements and locally within each movement; the tonal contrast among the four instruments look to be highlighted, constructed, or juxtaposed; the shape of the melodies and the form of the movements want to be attended to. It is at this point that I argue – the 'grain' in the string quartet emerged effectively through the one-coloured soundscape, partly through the performing realization of expert musicians and also through the selection of the subjects – a combination of which is capable of resulting in pleasure and excitement in my judgement, and popular in nature.

2.1.4 Popular Turn – Malaysian Turn

I have always been attracted by what I hear in my popular music surrounding, and in this case, the 12356 motif was heard and 'harvested' at Jalan Petaling, the tourist area of Kuala Lumpur. I heard it as it forms the introduction and interlude of the popular song blasted from a loud hailer.

On the other hand, as a Malaysian composer, I have always considered string quartet music to be western classical, non-improvisational or 'every note has to be written down'. How could I compose a string quartet piece that skews closer to the popular, as referred to in the Malaysian context, and relate to its targeted audiences on television entertainment programme, in a party or in a 'rush-hour' concert? I decided that it would be a generous use of jazz harmonic language, memorable melodies, and popular rhythmic background that could contribute to the 'twist' that I aimed for. I had employed jazz harmonic language in particular, because I had graduated from a music college that specialises in jazz and other non-classical music genres, and this expertise in jazz harmony had served me in my subsequent professional assignments in the Malaysian

music industry. Also, I aimed to combine musical elements from different cultures reinforcing the Malaysian taste for hybridity and multiculturalism.

With the knowledge that a professional string quartet would workshop this piece, I could write 'anything I want' – in other words, there would not be any inhibitions on the technical demand for the musicians.

While musicians may argue about 'what is difficult to play' – when the best-selling instrumentalist Kenny G maintains that 'there is nothing more challenging than playing two or three notes that can touch people emotionally' (Cole, 1992) - I will focus on the criteria of accuracy of intonation, rhythmic groove, and a general sense of musicianship which equip the musicians to perform the written work closest to the intention of the composer. I intended this piece to be of a broad popular and Malaysian category, and that its power should come from its invocation and musical dramatization of memory, nostalgia and entertainment.

What American musicologist Robert Walser (2003) has remarked - that 'meanings are not random, yet the complexity of culture renders them not always predictable' (p. 30) - has come to exemplify the situation of this creative task at hand. The ubiquitous pentatonic sounds in the piece allude, for listeners familiar with the tradition, to folk origin, racial / national identity, or to genres like jazz or gamelan music, despite it being performed by a string quartet. What I mean by this is that the meanings of the piece – popular by nature – are contingent upon the mediated perception informed by knowledge, in this case its complexity compounded by the lack of lyrics / language.

Players, listeners and audience will understand and create meanings from listening to this string quartet piece. I argue that the pentatonic sound from

this piece will particularly 'make sense' to Malaysians when it raises the impression of particular Chinese tunes or of gamelan soundscape, for example, all of which is traceable from and dependent upon the prior musical knowledge of the individual. While I compose this piece freely, I realise the resulting music affect is ambiguous, forming different meanings to each individual.

As an orchestral composer of popular music in Malaysia, I secretly welcome these ambiguities, hoping that they might constitute a discourse currency for the dissemination – hence, potentially, the popularity, of the piece.

2.1.5 Pentatonic and Colours

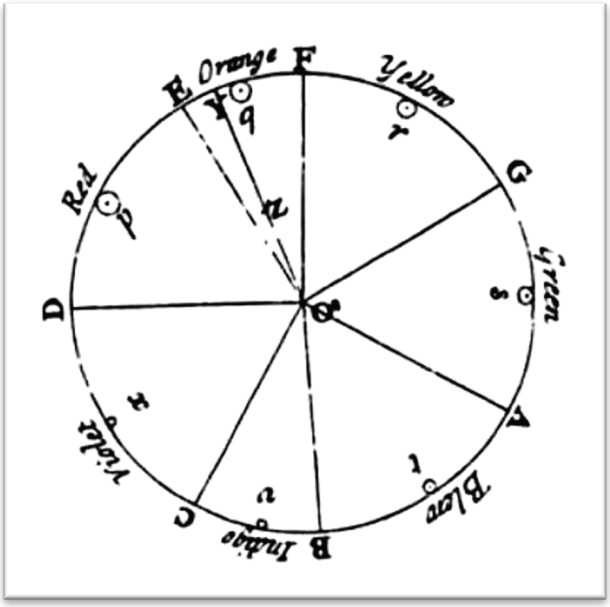


Figure 2.2 Newton's asymmetric colour wheel correlates colours with musical notes and planetary symbols (from 'Optiks' (1704) http://archive.org/stream/opticksortreatis1730newt#page/n7/mode/2up, accessed on 15 May 2013)

The Munsell colour system is a 20th century system for numerically describing colours, based on equal steps for human visual perception. The

Munsell system distinguishes 100 hues, the apparent discreteness of the principal colours is an artefact of human perception and the exact number of main colours might be viewed to be, to some extent, arbitrary. Writing in 1672, Newton divided the spectrum into five main colours; next he included orange and indigo, giving seven main colours by analogy to the number of notes in a musical scale (Newton, see Figure 2.2). I intend to argue that the relationship between sound – pentatonic in this case – and colours in a spectrum are cross-sensory metaphors – listening and seeing, and the many intersections will serve to illuminate the properties, gesture and morphology of the pentatonic motif in this piece.

> *In visual perception a colour is almost never seen as it really is – as it physically is. This fact makes colour the most relative medium in art.*
> (Josef Albers, from Introduction to 'Interaction of Colors', 1975)

The German-American colour theorist Josef Albers (1888-1976) proposed that colour is the 'most relative medium in art' - highlighting the highly illusive nature of colours. As a composer, I find the pentatonic motif to have very similar traits in this piece, in that they are 'never seen as [they] really [are]' (*ibid*), and frequently in different guises. The pentatonic notes are often juxtaposed, partially omitted or repeated, and when compounded with musical expression of dynamics and articulation, in Albers' words they 'deceive continually', displaying shifting 'colour relativity', 'colour intensity', 'colour temperature', and 'vibrating and vanishing boundaries' – all these descriptions fitting both colours in music and colours in spectrum.

In *12356*, the pentatonic motif is the generative agent of the piece, in that it appears in the melody, the counterpoint, and in the harmony – ubiquitous but often in camouflage (for a glimpse of how the pentatonic motif is employed in the piece, please refer to Appendix 1 where, as much as it is possible, in the music score the motifs are highlighted in different colours encoding different pentatonic scales). Returning to Albers' theory of colour relativity and instability, where he promotes 'the interaction between colour and colour', the 'interdependence of colour with form and placement', 'with quantity (which measures amount, including recurrence)', 'with quality (intensity of light or hue)', 'with pronouncement (separating or connecting boundaries)' (p.5), I find these pentatonic motifs appear to change as they are juxtaposed upon each other. In view of the twelve pentatonic scales available; they change as they are placed in Lydian flat 7th context or in fugal form; they change as they are repeated many times or with changes of dynamics; and they change as the boundaries are pronounced. In other words, these pentatonic motifs are hard to see and they are disguised as something else – they behave like colours, as described by Albers. See Appendix 5 for spectrum of colours in different guises.

2.1.6 Conclusion

Composing *12356* proved to be a productive exercise in that it provides a platform for 'returning to the basics' - like painters perhaps who first learn to draw in pencil - and having removed the distraction of more tonal colours it forced me to deliberate on texture, tonal contrast, shape and form. In line with my practice and research aims, the choice of a pentatonic system underwrites Malaysian sensibilities in that it is not European diatonic – a case of simple bipolarity in my research context - and I have infused it with familiar musical

elements to defend its popular currency. The absence of Malaysian instruments in the ensemble line up has pushed the aesthetic reification from the apparent to the abstract – now the Malaysian-ness, imagined or not, is totally embedded in the music.

To conclude, I maintain that the metaphors of monochrome visual and spectrum colour behaviour aptly reflect my composition principles and these metaphors extend from 'seeing' to 'seeing as', an alternate way of illuminating the creative process.

2.2 Ti Oh Oh

Based on the national statistics record in 2019[36], approximately 22% of the Malaysian population is ethnic Chinese. And, there is a relatively complete Chinese medium education system which covers both primary school and secondary school level. This background information partly explains why the Chinese music industry develops and flourishes in Malaysia, and why Chinese music acts from Taiwan tour in Southeast Asia, particularly in Malaysia and Singapore (where ethnic Chinese patrons reside). That is, there exists a Chinese music market lucrative enough to attract the performing and recording artists from Taiwan to visit and perform in Malaysia since 1970s. At the same time, Malaysians musicians and singers who are ethnic Chinese have also exported their work to Taiwan since the 1970s, expanding to the mainland China, Hong Kong and Macau in the last 10 to 20 years.

I had attended Chinese medium primary school and secondary school in Malaysia, and I had received my first tertiary education in Taiwan from 1986

[36] Statistics figure accessed from mycensus.gov.my on 15 April, 2020.

to 1990. This was one of the study paths available to the Malaysian students since the 1960s, as the Taiwan government was offering generous scholarships for overseas Chinese students. I had studied language and linguistic in National Tsing Hua University in Taiwan during 1986-1990, and I had toured Taiwan making many friends over the four years.

In 2011, 21 years after my graduation from Taiwan, in one of the British Forum of Ethnomusicology's training days, I met some Taiwanese ethnomusicology graduate students at Senate House in London. We started conversations as we all speak Mandarin, and they soon invited me to write a piece for their Rush Hour Concert to be held a few months later. I would not be receiving any payment for the work, but I would be hosted in one of the students' home when I visit Sheffield for the rehearsal and concert. In other words, with this gig, not only did I write the piece for free, I had to pay for the train fare to Sheffield, and spent a few days at Sheffield. I have decided to write them the Taiwanese folk tune *Ti Oh Oh*[37].

Most of the musicians who played the piece were PhD students studying at The University of Sheffield, and they played the traditionally Chinese instruments at an expert level – which means I could write anything I hear and not have to adjust to the capabilities of the musicians. Since I wrote in Western music staff notation, they also read it well enough that they can translate their respective parts into the Chinese music notation system. Ensemble rehearsals had taken place two days before the concert, and they had done well with

[37] *Ti Oh Oh* is very popular in Malaysia, particularly for the Malaysian Chinese who speaks Hokkien ('Fujian') dialect. Aside from Malay language, I speak Hokkien as mother tongue, as my father was born in Fujian and he had moved to Malaysia when he was a teenager in 1930's.

minimal intervention – I only had to offer the holistic musical ideas on the band stand when I finally joined them.

I argue that how well musicians have command of the instruments partly determines how I compose the pieces for them. In composing for this portfolio, not unlike in my Malaysian context, musicians of professional level would be playing the pieces. That is, the virtuosity of the musicians do not figure in the composition process as much as how the coupling of instrument timbres would. The knowledge of the range of the instruments, the structure of the pieces, and the uniqueness of the timbre is taken for granted in my everyday practice.

The other repertoire in this Rush Hour concert program consists of canon Chinese traditional music. By which I mean, *Ti Oh Oh* has become the contemporary piece by virtue of it being a bespoke commission, newly composed, although it is based on a traditional folk tune. I argue that this piece is popular because this folk tune is native to Taiwanese – I have selected a tune that is indigenous to the musicians and to most of the audience; and it is written in the tradition that the melody is clearly outlined in the orchestration, the melody is diatonic and the overall soundscape is tonal. The instruments in this ensemble include two *erhu*, two *pipa*, a *liuqing*, a *zhongruan*, a Chinese orchestra percussion set, and a cello.

Figure 2.4 Players Zhang Geping (L) and Zhao Xiaotong practice playing the pipa at Lanzhou traditional orchestra in Lanzhou, Gansu Province in China, May 13, 2019. From http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2019-05/14/c_138057504_6.htm, accessed on 18 April 2020

In writing for this ensemble, I stayed close to the commonly heard rhythm and melody, that is, the melody is pentatonic and the rhythm is in 2/4, in a moderate tempo. I started the piece by creating a short introduction passage, which uses elements from the main melody to prepare for the entry of this melody. The melody is assigned to the first and second *erhu*, occasionally being passed to the first and second *pipa*. The percussion player plays woodblock, outlining the 2/4 rhythm in crochets, and *zhongruan* lays out the harmony in the tenor and bass range.

After four bars of interlude passage that is similar to the introduction, the *pipa* plays a section that sounded fast, virtuosic and improvisatory. This seemingly improvisatory section, however, is written out and the musician has

to read and play it. Following closely after, the *liuqing* player plays an additional section of improvisatory passage that is, again, written out. The two *erhu* players and *zhongruan* player, in these sections, play long notes outlining the harmonic background.

With an intention to create a stark contrast to the lively passages thus far, I created a lyrical section at rehearsal letter F, which marks the middle section of the piece. This expressive melody is assigned to *erhu*, a string instrument that has an arguably 'yearning sound', frequently associated with sad, sobbing and bitter emotions. The *zhongruan* gets a chance to play four bars of melody with the technique of tremolo, where the string-plucked melody is repeated at a very fast speed creating a long-note sound. Thereafter, both *erhu* and *zhongruan* play a unison passage that is musically derived from the theme, to conclude this lyrical passage and set up a connection to the final section.

The final section with a rehearsal marking of G, resumes the tempo at the start of the piece. However, the melody modulates to the key of G minor here, and the arrangement is full of rhythmic figures that resonate with the lively character of the piece.

The lyric of this folk tune describes an old couple, the grandfather and the grandmother, who have been arguing about how to cook the sweet potato they have dug out from the ground on a rainy day. Let it be sweet, one says, and the other says savoury, as they continue to argue. Towards the end of the tune, the frying wok is broken accidentally as it falls to the floor. I have employed the crash cymbal to re-present the sound of a wok crashing on the floor, and the general pause that follows to re-present the scenario that the old folks stare

at the broken wok in disbelief. Then, the tune ends with a delightful exclamation, literally ‘what a funny scenario’, a commentary from the audience and the composer-performer.

The piece ends with the musicians shouting ‘*wah* – *ha* – *ha*’, notated as crossed head notes on the music score, as a response to the commentary at the end of the tune.

2.3 *Lenggang Kangkung* (from Muo Li Hua Concert)

Lenggang Kangkung literally meaning 'the sway of the water spinach', is a popular tune for children in Malaysia and Indonesia. The Malaysian and the Indonesian versions sound just a little different while the narratives / lyrics are totally different. Since the melody varies in limited ways, and the tagline remains '*Lenggang Lenggang Kangkung*' in both versions, the shared common source is unmistakeable. While the motif is the swaying water spinach, the Malaysian lyrics carry the message of moral disciplines including not to gamble and not to be arrogant, while the Indonesian lyrics describe the beauty of the women swaying and walking in a carefree manner.

In Malaysia, the tune *Lenggang Kangkung* is taught in pre-schools and primary schools, making it a popular *lagu rakyat*, loosely translated to be 'folk tune', a tune that belongs to the people. The songstress Saloma has recorded the tune in the popular movie *Semerah Padi* (1956), with some variation to the lyrics and some music and melodic arrangements that lead towards Malay traditional music, which, in its original sound-track form, has garnered 41,000 views on YouTube. In addition, the contemporary popular singer Elizabeth Tan has recorded the tune in 2019, re-titled it *Shh*, employing only the *Lenggang Kangkung* motif as motif for the composition and adding newly created lyrics that are sung to electric dance music. This popular version has garnered 4.8 million views on YouTube, in part because of the marketing support of Warner Music (Malaysia), an international commercial record company.

I composed this piece based on the *Lenggang Kangkung* that is popular in Malaysia. This tune does not totally fit the available pitches on gamelan, as it includes a 7^{th} note (of the diatonic scale) in the melody. The Gamelan Melayu

pitches are only *do, re, mi, so, la*, a pentatonic scale tuning. However, like other gamelan composer-arrangers, I move the 'outside note' one step up or one step down to fall into the available pitches of gamelan. Since this melody has only one 'outside note', the resulting melody stays close to the melody as we know it.

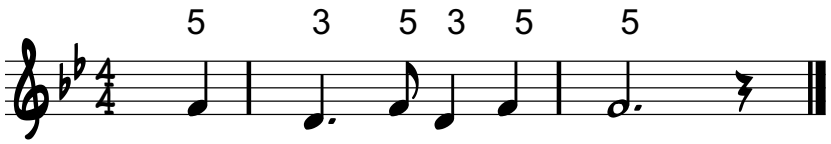


Figure 2.5: *Lenggang Kangkong* motif

With this composition of *Lenggang Kangkung* for gamelan and big band, I identify and experiment with the first phrase of the melody as a motif (Figure 2.5 above) to develop a textural passage on the gamelan. The numbers above the notes shown in Figure 2.5 are what the gamelan players would have been reading, revealing the difference between the Western chromatic or tonal system and the gamelan pitch set system, which includes only the five pitches *do, re, mi, so, la*. In other words, the Western music staff system of notation is much too 'luxurious' for the purpose of composing for gamelan, as the staff provides many more 'spaces' than are relevant to gamelan.[38] Nevertheless, for the purpose of this project, I decided to write in the Western music staff system, only to have the gamelan musicians 'translate' the gamelan parts for their ease of reading. As a result of this decision, I 'assimilated' and included the gamelan in the 'gamelan–big band' partnership to the extent that they were truly equal partners. The gamelan tradition was compromised only in the music notation

[38] The intricacies and richness of gamelan music, aside from the pitches, are still being passed down orally, so gamelan music scores include only relatively basic information.

for this project, but the natural gamelan sonority was in practice retained and even expanded.

How can ‘assimilation’ lead to ‘equality’, particularly in this composition process and in the Malaysian context? I argue for this from two perspectives: 1) In terms of music notation, having both the gamelan and big band music written in one common music notation, incidentally the western music staff system here, sets up the overarching view that the two are equal. In practice, the common master score facilitates the orchestra conductor during rehearsals and performance; 2) In Malaysia, when ensembles of different traditions perform together in national celebrations or other events, the master score is always written in western music staff system in search of standardisation. It is, however, worth mentioning that the composer and the orchestra conductor usually have working knowledge of the different ensembles and thus be able to read the common master score and imagine the sounds notated thereof.

2.3.1 Traces of the influence of my study in the UK

The imitative passage at the beginning of the piece, based on the above motif, can be traced back to my study of *fugue* and the subsequent influence and result of three years of study in the UK. I find this imitative sonority to be among the most interesting soundscapes, in which the generating motif is stated clearly at the beginning, with its subsequent entry clearly ‘marked’ out in different parts. Thereafter, I find the sound texture to be ‘complex’; that is, I hear different lines in different parts, yet I cannot clearly decipher each part, which gives me an impression of a sound fabric. I can then anticipate the ending of the piece when the motif is clearly heard again, sometimes in different guises.

Before my study in the UK, I could not imagine that I would compose such imitative passage into my work in Malaysia – it is deemed unusual, probably too luxurious, too pretentious, too modern. Is it ironic that this imitative musical art form would be heard as modern in Malaysia today, in the 21st century? Here, modern implies the meaning of 'unusual, and progressive'.

From my perspective as a Malaysian popular music composer, to include an imitative passage into a gamelan work reflects my curiosity in exploring different sound textures for my work during and after my studies in London. In hindsight as I write this thesis, I find that in my everyday practice as a popular music composer in Malaysia, I always strive to create something new yet nothing too modern. There is always a delicate balance or struggle between the desire to create something that will be well received, and something that meets the composer's to be progressive. This exercise of including an imitative passage for gamelan ensemble somewhat reflects the struggle.

2.3.2 The composition and the performance

In *Lenggang Kangkung*, the motif could not be transposed as it was limited by the gamelan pitch set; therefore, I could only work on developing the note values and the dynamic and different couplings of the instruments in the ensemble before the big band enters. The audio recording submitted with this thesis is a recording of the performance by British musicians based in Nottingham. The recording is substantially shorter than the piece I had written, as shown in the master score, because the Nottingham musicians found the gamelan lines I had written too difficult to play. This is because the Nottingham musicians are not professional musicians and the opening imitative passages are not typical of any gamelan repertoire. Together, we decided to stop at a

point we found manageable, and we brought the vocal in, in a way that we found acceptable and musical.

The singer in this performance, Jia-An, was a Malaysian student studying in Year 3 in the undergraduate program at Middlesex University. She sang a convincing rendition of the folk tune, *Lenggang Kangkong*, starting in the key of B flat, followed by an improvised and lyrical version of the tune, before transposing to the key of D flat. In the interests of compositional strategy, I shall describe the modulation of the tune to D flat. How could the fixed pitch set gamelan, on this particular set which sounded the pitches of B flat, C, D, F and G, fit into the key of D flat?

This experiment of transposing the tonal centre of a piece was based on an inspiration drawn from the visual arts. Figure 2.6 shows the seven colours of the spectrum of light, that are violet, indigo, blue, green, yellow, orange and red, and Figure 2.7 outlines where the colours are hidden among the woods, and therefore visibly *handicapped*. For this piece, I drew a parallel between the colours in Figures 2.6 and 2.7, and the pentatonic pitches on the gamelan in the key of B flat and then in the key of D flat: when the pentatonic pitches perform in the key of B flat they are clear, solid and formal, as in Figure 6; and when they perform in the key of D flat they are hidden, and therefore sonically *handicap*, like in Figure 2.7. 'The 'handicap' emerges only when the colours are hidden from full view. That is, in parallel, although not all of the pitches on the gamelan can be utilised in the key of D flat, this handicap does not stop the gamelan from being functional.

As a result, there emerges what I argue to be a *beauty of handicap* in the whole, in which the pentatonic colours of the gamelan cannot always be

‘complete’ when in the key of D flat, thereby creating the impression of a ‘new’ instrument. As in Figure 2.7, the spectrum of colours is not ‘complete’ or ‘whole’ in the woods, but the colours aptly play the role of being part of the picture.

Figure 2.6: Jennifer (2011). *Rainbow Inspiration* (available from: thedesigninspiration.com, accessed 15 May 2013)

Figure 2.7: HSID (2012). *Fall Spectrum in the Tatoosh Range Mount Rainier National Park* (available from: http://nice-cool-pics.com/img-fall-spectrum-in-the-tatoosh-range,-mount-rainier-national-park-3990.htm, accessed 15 May 2013)

Reflecting on the Malaysian context, gamelan ensembles have increasingly been used in a handicapped fashion in the last 10 years. That is, contrary to the conventional composition practice for the gamelan where all pitches available are used, contemporary compositions often use only some of the pitches in search of a different or new sonority. Like my composition in question, I use only some of pitches on the gamelan because not all of the pitches fit the section in D flat key. As a result, a new key centre can be created, without leaving out the gamelan. This is particularly convenient when the gamelan ensemble is paired with the big band, whose instruments are chromatic.

2.3.3 Miss Landmine and the beauty of handicap

To expand on the notion of the beauty of handicap, Figure 2.8, taken at the Miss Landmine competition held in Cambodia reflects an alternative reading to Figure 2.7 above.[39]

Figure 2.8: Photo from http://miss-landmine.org/cambodia/index.php/news.html (accessed 12 August 2015)

[39] This is a competition aimed at raising awareness of the proliferation of landmines in Cambodia. The winner gets a sponsored prosthetic limb.

The girl in the photo is standing with only her right leg, her left leg is visibly missing. By looking at this photo, I deduce that she could be bending her left leg and stepping it against the wall. That is, although she has two legs like most healthy people, only one is visible. I argue that what we cannot see, but must infer, is the art practitioner's own ways of seeing and understanding. Particularly, I draw a parallel again between this photo and the pentatonic pitches of the gamelan ensemble: the photo has captured an image of a girl with her left leg bent, or hidden from full view, corresponding to the gamelan ensemble in D flat key which has only some, not all, pitches employed. The preamble for the argument at hand is, the girl has two legs, and the gamelan has five pitches, although only one leg is visible, and less than five pitches are heard.

I argue that, just like one appreciates the leg that has been bent, the missing pitches on the gamelan are indiscernible. That is, listeners will hear that the gamelan in the D flat key section has 'only the right leg, with the left leg bent', the section remains workable with the 'handicap', now pointing to the non-utilisation of all the pitches available on the gamelan ensemble.

I continue to argue that, in the Malaysian context of the professional music activities, the argument and subsequent decision for a 'beauty of the handicap' is all prevalent. By which I mean, composers often pragmatically match, install and make do with available music instruments for the assignments or jobs at hand. To fit a B flat tuning gamelan ensemble to a passage in D flat key, I have to embrace the handicap, and employ only the

pitches that match. The pitches that are used shall serve the composition and aesthetic purpose as well as when all the pitches can be used.

2.4 Jambatan Tamparuli

Sabah is one of the two Malaysian states occupying the northern part of the Borneo island. Well known as the 'Land below the wind', it is also the second largest state in Malaysia, after the other state, Sarawak, which is also on Borneo island. In 1963, the states of Sabah and Sarawak joined peninsular Malaya to become part of Malaysia.

When I was working as a full-time musician with the state broadcasting agency Radio Television Malaysia (RTM), I frequently travelled to Kota Kinabalu, the capital of Sabah on duty. Together with the other RTM musicians at Kota Kinabalu, we staged live concerts and shows for public or holiday celebrations, including *kaamatan* (harvest celebration), Malaysia Day, New Year's Eve, Christmas, and even the birthday concerts of the chief of state. The people of Sabah are known to be musical and they compose many popular tunes unique to the state, building a vibrant music industry. The work experience at Sabah left a musical impression on me, and I deliberately looked for opportunities to work with Sabahan music material. *Jambatan Tamparuli* is one such popular melody.

It is a folk tune about the suspension bridge in the town of Tamparuli, on the west coast of Sabah state, which relates the story of a villager crossing the bridge in high (heeled) shoes.

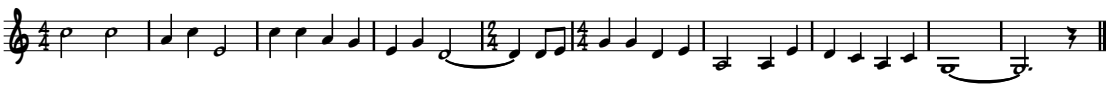


Figure 2.9 Jambatan Tamparuli melody

In this piece, which has a metronome marking of crotchet equals 69, I chose to use only the *bonang* from the traditional ensemble, which starts the piece softly with the typical quaver figure, with the pitches of C, D, and G, implying C chord with added '2', and with the pitches of Bb, C and G, this time implying C7 chord. The absence of E note – a guide tone - on both chords creates an 'open' sound, and when coupled with the unique timbre of *bonang* it provides the introductory background for a pentatonic folk tune.

Here, at the introduction and at the end of the piece, Mr Leslie, a Sarawak native, and Mr Kamrul Hussein, a Kelantan native, played 'toy' instruments that produce the sounds of frogs croaking – called 'frog whistle', sounds of rainfall - 'rain tree', in an attempt to recreate the atmosphere of a tropical jungle. I verbally requested for the instruments to be played, but I have not written it in the parts, as the instruments – not always available - are only played successfully with considerable skills and discretion of the musicians.

I was recommended to hire Mr Matthew Grocutt the jazz trumpet player, and I asked him to play the flugelhorn for the solo melody and improvise over the chord changes I created over the melody. I hired a jazz player because I have been trained in jazz, I have had satisfying experiences working with jazz players, and I am confident with the improvisatory capability of a jazz player, and I know it would work in this context. In light of my composition research here, I am combining music from different cultures. Reflecting on the Malaysian

context, jazz players have often been hired to enhance the compositions; that is, the jazz players often contribute by adding a ‘twist’ to the performances, without swerving too far from the style of the pieces.

The flugelhorn has a more mellow tone quality compared to the trumpet, and I selected it for its ‘solo jazz’ character and tradition. The lowest note in this tune in the key of C is G below the middle C, and it sits just within the lowest range of the instrument. The projection of an instrument at the extreme range is intended – although in the recording proper Mr Grocutt chose to play the melody slightly differently to avoid the low range, prompted by my written instruction to play this section ‘freely’.

For the first 14 bars, or 49 seconds duration, the melody that is accompanied by only the *bonang*, with its incomplete chord structure, settles down only when the strings enter in bar 15. I harmonized the melody to adopt the sounds of Lydian $^{b}7$, with the use of suspended 4^{th} secondary dominants and otherwise diatonic chords.

In section B, all the string instruments, excluding the contrabass, play the melody in unison, in the mid-range of the violins and high range of the violas and the cellos, thus creating the expressive, mellow, and thick timbre unique to the string family. As the melody dives into the lower range, I have the violins play *pizzicato* figure echoing the melody, to avoid open string long notes on G, the last note. Only the violas and cellos coupled with clarinet persist with the melody towards the last phrase, thus creating a tapering effect.

Mr Grocutt improvised over the chord changes that are implied through the *bonang* figure, and after two bars, the strings sectional chords. During the second round of this repeated section, in the background the violins, violas and

cellos play harmonics producing a sparse, surreal and transparent texture while the flute and oboe dovetail a counter melody. The cellos and double bass play a notated jazz bass line.

The clarinet enters immediately after the flugelhorn solo, with a notated solo part with extensive syncopation, while the two horns play selective guide tones to outline the harmonic progression. This creates a bridge into the next section, which employs a parallel minor tonality.

In section F, the key signature changes into three flats, sounding a tonality of C minor. The result is that the melody now adopts the so-called Japanese scale character, with the 3rd and the 6th notes lowered by a semitone.

In order to reduce the distinctness of the resultant melody – I intended to write a Malaysian melody, not a Japanese melody - I harmonized it to assume a natural minor tonality. The consequence is a 'sad' melody played by the sweeping harmonized string section, only to be dovetailed by the flugelhorn playing the melody with the two horns and bassoon as harmonic pad. The piece ends with the last phrase repeated twice, once by the violas, cellos, flute and bassoon, and the last with the full ensemble playing the harmonized melody, ending with a contrabass *pizzicato* figure, coupled with bass and *bonang* in unison.

Figure 2.10 Jambatan Tamparuli (from rakan1klik.blogspot.com)

Figure 2.11 Jambatan Tamparuli (from tripwow.tripadvisor.com)

2.4.1 Discussion

As evident from Figures 2.10 and 2.11, *Jambatan (Gantung, 'suspension') Tamparuli* is an impressive landmark by any standard. It is the major attraction in the town of Tamparuli, about 30km away from Kota Kinabalu, the capital of Sabah state. Nevertheless, it is generally acknowledged that this hanging bridge is immortalized by the Kadazandusun tune composed by Justin Lusah in the 1970s. The use of only the *bonang* from the Malaysian ensemble reflects the music tradition of *kulintangan* in Sabah. Since we do not have

kulintangan in the performing ensemble – the *bonang* is the closest in the *gong* family of instruments available, its employment is inevitable. I was also consciously searching to pair the notable timbre of the *bonang* against the lush string palette and solo flugelhorn colour – I deliberately constructed the 'extreme simplicity', by which I mean the melody remains intact – free from moderation, appropriation or tempering.

Figure 2.12 Kulintangan (photo from www.mysabah.com)

The melody, pentatonic in nature – that is, the tune is made up of only 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 5th, and 6th steps of a major scale, is transformed from a lively, folk natured dance tune *(*in *sumazau* for example) into a lyrical theme in an instrumental piece. Here, the absence of the lyric did not reduce the effect of the tune, in that it continues to assert the 'Sabah' character, by which I point to its charm and popularity that continue to seduce composers, musicians and the general public in Malaysia.

My seemingly simple treatment of the tune aims to present this music in its rustic form, in an effort to re-present the simplistic folk impression. This

simplicity is purposely constructed in an effort to contrast this piece with the other more 'developed' pieces in the set of 'Simfonika 1Malaysia'. That is, the melody in the other pieces would have been treated and undergone many metamorphoses, but here in *Jambatan Tamparuli,* the melody sounds the same as when it is sung in the Sabah social context.

I argue that this piece meets the criteria of 'fitting in' the popular music context I have set out in Chapter 1, in that I have deployed composition potentials with professional skills – the use of popular folk melody, harmonization, and instrumentation. I maintain that this careful restraint of (over)-treatment is partly a result of my professional experience and maturity that aims to create 'great simplicity'[40] – deceivingly simple and yet, 'great'.

Relating to the Malaysian context in general, I find the popular songs that are featured at award shows or popularity charts have deceivingly simple melodies, chord changes, and constant pulse-like rhythms. While it is contentious to argue that simplicity is the goal of the composers and producers, it is clear that I exercise every day restraint on my compositions. I do not apply everything I learned at the music conservatory to my compositions, not without due judgement of taste and value. I argue that a higher value is placed on other requirements such as 1) a melody that is easy to learn and sing along, 2) industry level sound treatment including mixing, balancing and mastering, and 3) good looking or charismatic singers.

[40]I use this term based on Walser (1993) who argues that musicians use 'great skill to craft musical texts that communicate great simplicity' (p171).

CONCLUSION

This portfolio of compositions which includes four selected pieces of different instrumention, different musicians and different context has been put together to argue for a 'constant' in the compositional practice. The recurring constants broadly include 1) generous use of jazz pop harmony, memorable melodies and dance-like rhythms, a description that is often associated to every day popular music; 2) liberal use of 'traditional' and 'folk' sources for construction of melodies, and imagination of timbre; and 3) considered employment of non-western instruments, often juxtaposing with standard ensemble line-up like the jazz big band or chamber orchestra.

No	Title	Musicians	Line up	Remarks on Context
1	'12356'	Allegri String Quartet (UK)	String Quartet	Original melody
2	*Ti Oh Oh*	University of Sheffield, ethnomusicology doctoral students from Taiwan (UK)	two *erhu*, two *pipa*, *liuqing*, *zhongruan*, Chinese orchestra percussion set, and cello	Folk tune from Taiwan
3	*Lenggang Kangkung*	UK musicians from Nottingham (Gamelan Ensemble) + London session musicians (Jazz Big Band)	Gamelan ensemble + Jazz Big Band	Folk tune from Malaysia / Indonesia
4	*Jambatan Tamparuli*	Malaysian musicians (traditional ensemble) + London Chamber Orchestra	Malaysian traditional ensemble + Chamber orchestra	Popular (folk) tune from Sabah, Borneo Malaysia

Figure 2.13 Summary chart of the 4 pieces in this portfolio

BOOK 1 CONCLUSION

Research Undertaking, its origins and development

This practice-based research is aimed at finding the composition improvement for a Malaysian professional orchestral composer, and the portfolio of four pieces of compositions that I had composed is submitted to serve as a guide to the answer of this research. It also appears that the use of Malaysian traditional instruments juxtaposed with Western music instruments suggests a Malaysian penchant for hybridity and multiculturalism, part of the national political aesthetics in music.

My professional background in the Malaysian music industry context, coupled with my education background from Berklee College of Music, has shaped my judgement of taste and value in the process of composition. Based on my professional experience, training and education, I have a clear idea, or imagination, of what works, or not, in each of the compositions. The doctoral studies and the composition assignments in London have allowed me to reflect on these influences that contribute to my expertise, and how I continue to manage the everyday within my professional context, including the arguably 'eureka' moments, the improvement that I imagine.

In line with the autoethnography method and outcome, I have documented Malaysian national political aesthetics in music, in a personal / experiential perspective, focusing particularly on the period of my doctoral study from 2010 to 2016. What I have attempted to demonstrate is the fact that as an active popular music composition practitioner, I am a strategically-placed 'insider' observer of the Malaysian historical-musical continuum, not least when

it is framed and reappraised against a backdrop of hybridity and multiculturalism.

During the seven-year period of my doctoral research, I lived in London from 2010 to 2013, when I performed for the Malaysian Prime Minister's visit to London, and composed for and recorded with different line-up or various combinations of instruments in the UK.

After my return to Kuala Lumpur in September 2013, I was involved in the royal concert, *Konsert Raja dan Rakyat Tiada Berpisah* held at Istana Budaya. I have connected the practice portfolio I produced in the UK with *Konsert Raja dan Rakyat Tiada Berpisah*, now made Case Study 1 in Chapter 1. Through this connection and analysis, I have alluded to the current Malaysian national political aesthetics in music. Case Study 2 is the up-close, in-depth and detailed investigation at the outset of 'Simfonika 1Malaysia', the fourth piece in the composition portfolio. The intention of this case study report, in addition to the exegesis of *Jambatan Tamparuli* from 'Simfonika 1Malaysia' in Chapter 2, is to exploit and elaborate on the political, social and cultural context of this set of composition in 'Simfonika 1Malaysia'. It also serves as the precursor to the exegesis in Chapter 2, appearing as the final section in Chapter 1.

While I draw in passing on these notions that have triggered reflection on my part, I do so notionally, as indicated above, rather than systematically. As a professional practitioner, I tend to look for triggers to enable reflection on compositional choices - e.g. pentatonic colours - in place of wholesale theories of composition. I have also used autoethnographic techniques - as these play their role in qualitative analysis in disciplines in the arts - to document and describe my practice, including music creation, production and the peripheral

context, with the aim of describing Malaysian national political aesthetics in music.

The practice portfolio, composed and mostly recorded at Middlesex University between 2010 and 2012, was systematically designed to exploit various groups of instruments in the Western orchestra and traditional instruments used in Malaysia. The intention was also to experiment with "crossing" or "hybridising" instruments from both Western and Malaysian traditions in the ensemble line-up, with the aim of creating "new" Malaysian music as part of the quest for an improvement in the composer agency. In particular, I started with compositions for string quartet and jazz big band, both drawn from the Western tradition, and continued with compositions for gamelan ensemble and Chinese ensemble, both from the Malaysian tradition. I then crossed the two traditions by juxtaposing the jazz big band and gamelan ensemble, and a *pipa* and string quartet ensemble. Finally, I combined a London chamber orchestra with a group of traditional instruments from Malaysia to produce the set of pieces named collectively *Simfonika 1Malaysia*.

I developed my enquiry into this issue of composing Malaysian music of different traditions as a part of the quest for an improvement in the everyday composition practice, wherein the element of practice was understood to extend the enquiry established in the written element of the research enquiry. What this has meant is that I have been able, while remaining within the doctoral framework, to explore this relationship of professional context, and historical cultural factors more fully, while putting practice at the heart of the research.

By reflecting on the repertoire in my practice portfolio in the UK during the years 2010-2012, and relating to what I subsequently delivered in various professional contexts in 2015-2016 in Kuala Lumpur, I have reached the conclusion that Malaysian national political aesthetics, as reflected and manifested in judgements of taste and value in my practice, are led and shaped by both political and popular considerations. This is particularly valid within the framework of my professional context, as I have worked with the Ministry of Information in a radio and television broadcasting station, and also with the Ministry of Tourism and Culture in the national theatre. From this perspective, I would judge that supposedly 'experimental' efforts to create modern Malaysian music are often, if not always, hampered by a political agenda, reinforcing a "meta-social commentary" that celebrates and reproduces political ideals and conventions (Geertz, 1993).

It is worth noting that there exists a strange tension between Malaysian political music – that is, music led by the political agenda, and music in the mass media. In my view, government officers struggle to cope with the taste of the people which is arguably global and constantly changing, and the political will to impose a national identity that appear to be served by a generous use of traditional instruments and 'folk' melodies. This raises the question of whether it is possible to create and produce music that both bears national signifiers and is also well-liked by the Malaysian population.

Governmental popular music makers – amongst whom I include some of my own work - freely adapt, appropriate and develop popular and folk sources to turn music into a political tool with potent national and cultural markers. Malaysian music, at least from the perspective of public agencies, is

strongly local, but with disparate traditional and global influences. The composer's judgement of value and taste cannot be detached from the professional context that is constantly shaped by political, geographical and historical affects. Composers, and particularly 'successful' composers, are likely to actively negotiate with all stakeholders in the professional context.

I have now become acutely aware of judgements of taste and value within my professional context, which has raised further questions, such as the following: what are the 'real' taste and 'true' values that we hold dear; and how do composers negotiate their responses to modernity and current social commentary?

Chapter Guide and Summary

In Book 1, it includes an Introduction, Chapter 1 on the Malaysian context, Chapter 2 on the accompanying exegesis to the practice portfolio, and a Conclusion.

In Book 2, the music scores of the four selected pieces and the corresponding audio and video material are included.

In Chapter 1, the context chapter, I have clearly stated the two important research questions, the autoethnography method, and the research gap. I continue to discuss the general outline of popular music in Malaysia, including the geographical and historical factors affecting the industry and the practice, and discussions of how I define popular music in Malaysia, including a brief comparison to other music genres in Malaysia.

I have described the dilemma faced by Malaysian popular music composers in dealing with the commercial professional context and the artistic quest for improvement. I have also traced the music training of key people in the mass media, in music institutions and in government agencies who, directly or indirectly, dictate the Malaysian public's judgements of taste and value. I have described the general profile of these popular music composers, including reflection on how they obtain commissions, where they work and the nature of their compositions.

In describing and acknowledging the Euro-American influence on Malaysian music making, I have also highlighted the taste and value of *campur*, a Malaysian penchant for things to be mixed, juxtaposed and combined with no particular priority or hierarchy. Issues of multi-culturalism and inter-culturalism have been discussed briefly as notional references for these random acts of hybridity in music.

In short, I have outlined the industrial context of Malaysian popular music composers, shedding light on the taste and value reflected in creative decisions.

The theoretical and ideological notion of the everyday, from Michel de Certeau, and also the empirical fact of "everyday practice" has had a significant bearing on my professional practice. The routine and compromises encountered and endured everyday are overwhelming, but they can be lived with something like an art (of 'making-do') of the everyday. I have then continued to describe what as a professional practitioner I do every day, and how I manage assignments to compose and record compositions.

In the following section, I described *Konsert Raja dan Rakyat Tiada Berpisah*, the royal concert that celebrated the official birthday of the Sultan of Pahang state. I discussed the selection of the singer artists, who are popular singers who have been awarded titles by the palace of Pahang, how these artists are obliged to perform, their repertoire, the orchestra, the venue, the audience and their reception. I ended this chapter by discussing 'social habit memory' (Connerton, 1989) and 'secondary attributes rooted in practical and pre-reflexive habits and skills' (Edensor, 2002), supported by an exegesis of an introduction to *Simfonika 1Malaysia* written in 2013 at the point of composition and production in London.

In Chapter 2, I have focused on the discussions of the four selected pieces, including the context of the compositions, the unique inspiration and understanding that emerged as I compose each piece, and brief analysis of the piece.

For the string quartet piece, '12356', I have discussed the numbers in the title of the piece, the pentatonic soundscape, the inspiration for composition drawn from spectrum of colours and monochrome, and the notion of 'grain of voice' in compositions.

For *Ti Oh Oh*, the Chinese ensemble piece performed and recorded live at Sheffield, I have discussed the context of the composition, the improvisation passages that were written, the structure of the piece with contrasting sections, and how the cymbal crash and the general pause at the end of the piece reflect the narrative of the lyric.

In *Lenggang Kangkung*, I describe the production process and the creative decisions involved. I have also discussed how the piece was transposed from the key of B flat to the key of D flat, despite the fixed tonality of the gamelan. Reminiscent of the “beauty of handicap” seen and heard in the above treatment, Miss Landmine’s “missing leg” photograph and the other two photographs of colour spectrum help to explain how a B-flat pentatonic gamelan fits well in the key of D flat.

For *Jambatan Tamparuli*, the selected piece from *Simfonika 1Malaysia,* I have discussed the Borneo connection for the state of Sabah, the songs and the imagined *kulintangan*, the instrument of Sabah. I have also written a brief analysis of the compositions, how I develop the contrasting sections, the employment of a flugel horn and the frog whistle and rain tree sound effects at the beginning.

This practice-led research enquiry has as an outcome a portfolio of compositions, that is, four selected pieces from the series that was composed in London during the years 2010 to 2012.

List of Audio and Video Material

Between 2010 and 2012, while studying full-time at Middlesex University, I composed and recorded more than 120 minutes of music for submission. I planned the ensemble line-up systematically, and recorded the performances on audio or video format.

Titles of pieces and year of composition:

5. ‘12356’, String Quartet (July 2010).
6. Sheffield Chinese Music Ensemble, *Ti Oh Oh* (December 2011).

7. Mo Li Hua Concert (May 2011), *Lenggang Kangkung*.
8. *Simfonika 1Malaysia* (Oct 2012), *Jambatan Tamparuli*.

Suggestions for future research

This practice-led research has raised the following key questions:

First, how does modernity in music, including composition, performance and recording manifest itself in the Malaysian government and mass media context? What kind of 'new-ness' is accepted, supported and promoted? Where is the 'border' and, if there is one, what defines it? This question is an extension of the current research in that it would further explore the nature of the struggle in professional music practices, including composition, performance and recording. It is relevant to the music practitioners who strive for an improvement despite working in an everyday context, often subjected to political, commercial and market conditions. That is, how much can musical practitioners push the 'border', imagined or not, of modernity, without disrupting the current government musical constructs? And, what are the trade-offs to this pushing of the border of modernity, what do music practitioners and Malaysia the nation gain or lose?

Second, how does globalisation dictate or distort the formation of national identity in Malaysia? How does Malaysia differentiate itself and stand out from the many emerging countries in the performing arts? This question leads an inquiry into the issue of nation building and how musical and other arts identity play a part in the process. This is an issue that is particularly relevant in consideration of global positioning, globalisation and even the issue of glocalisation.

Third, how do non-western instruments, originating from various traditions, play a role in becoming Malaysian signifiers? Do they appear as agents of a certain ethnic groups, or do they appear as contemporary Malaysian instruments, like the drum set, electric guitar and violins which are commonly played without any ethnic or racial label? This inquiry points to the study of history and development of these instruments of various traditions, and how their use in the contemporary music composition shapes the creation of national music. This research will be useful in exploiting non-western instruments for creative use and for symbols of nation building.

Figure 25: Photographic evidence of the notion of “tactics” in de Certeau?

I propose to end this conclusion with an illustration of what has been called a “desire path” by architects and landscape designers: the photo above is taken from a brochure of Middlesex University’s Centre for Co-production in Mental Health, promoting the inaugural international seminar held on 18 July 2016. While the organiser may have sought to convey another meaning, I find

this an ideal illustration of de Certeau's notion of 'tactics' in everyday practices (1984): while the authorities in place have constructed the 'proper', durable and strategically designed pathway, seen here on the right, sufficient numbers of walkers (pedestrian) have preferred to mark out their own 'desire path' that runs at a slightly different angle while roughly pursuing the same sort of direction or goal.

In researching Malaysian national political aesthetics in music, I have come to understand that the government has built a proper 'route' of cultural definitions, but the people, particularly composers and other artists of the everyday seek to create something alternative to that established order, without the need for recourse to the "cutting edge" of late twentieth century Western experimentation. In other words, judgements of taste and value in Malaysian music are necessarily plural, with one or another "main" trunk(s) and many other additional or alternative branches.

Appendix 1

Figure 26: 'Mo Li Hua' concert poster, designed by Malaysian jewellery designer Ivon Wong – note the banana leaves motif bordering the poster, being the identity of '*nanyang*' or Southeast Asians' lives

Appendix 2 List of Musicians

Orkestra Tradisional Malaysia

Accordion
Shamsul Zain (Leader)

Erhu
Lim Soon Lay

Sitar
Kumar Karthigesu

Seruling
Rohaslam Hizad

Gambus / Vokal Lelaki
Norehan Saif

Violin Asli
Jefri Zain

Bonang / Perkusi
Ku Zahir Ku Ahmad

Rebana / Perkusi
Kamrul Hussein

Vokal Perempuan
Zuliana 'Linda' Mamat

RH Simfonietta

Violin 1
Paul Costin (Leader)
Gill Austin
Hazel Correa
Sophie Ryan
Brent Snell

Violin 2
Rebecca Kantor
Stephanie Niemira
Richard Smith
Mardyah Tucker

Viola
Rachel Steadman
Rosie Tompsett
Anne Marie Norman

Cello
Alex Barnes
Stephan Rees
Sally Woods

Bass
Damon Burrows

Clarinet
Mark Hayes

Flute
Ian Judson

Oboe
Rachel Broadbant

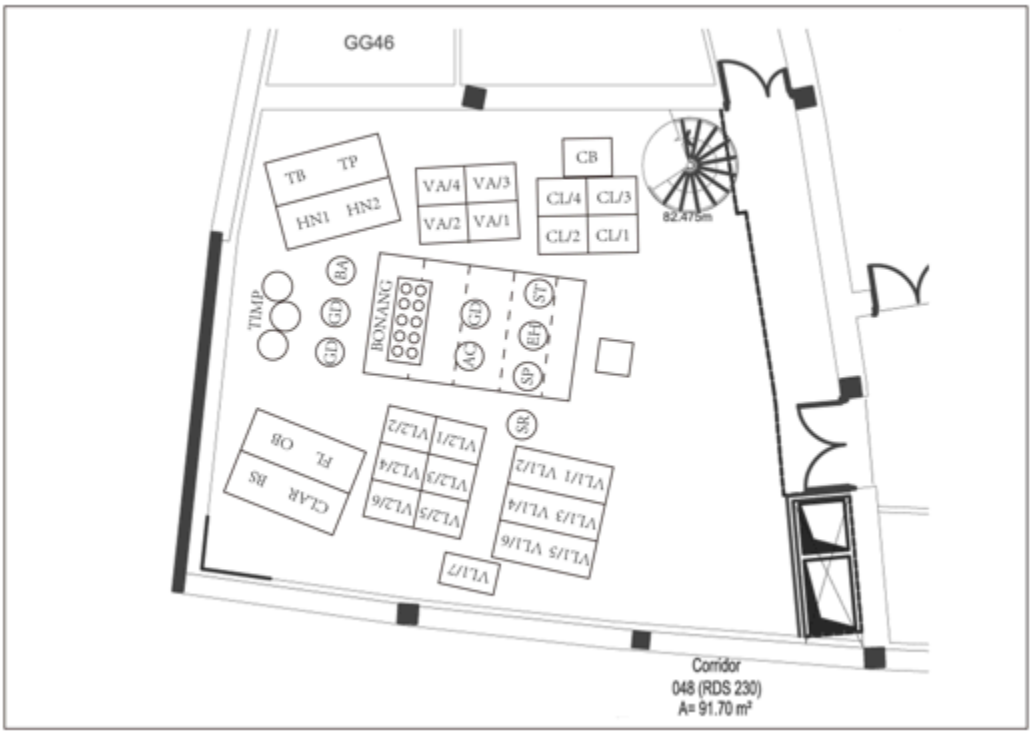
Bassoon
Matthew Orange

Horn
Chris Howlings
Duncan Gwyther

Trumpet
Matthew Grocutt

Trombone
Richard Hyams

Appendix 3 Simfonika 1Malaysia Recording – Studio Plan



Appendix 4 Director's Notes

SIMFONIKA 1MALAYSIA Recording Running Order

Summary of Orchestral Line Up and Pieces Highlight

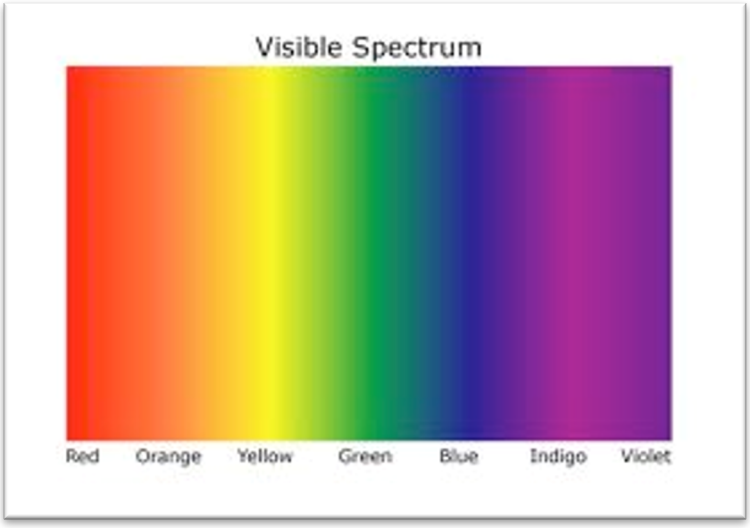
Prepared on 5 October 2012

	Title	Line Up (UK)	Line Up (Malaysian)	Highlights	Remarks
1	Puteri Santubong	Strings, WW, Brass		Sape solo	Leslie 'Sape' dance
2	Ayam Didik	Strings, WW, Brass	- Bonang, Gendang - Seruling, Accordion, Gambus, Erhu - Sape, Sitar	All	
3	Variasi Boria	Strings, WW, Brass	- Gendang 1, Gendang 2 - Accordion - Toys, Sitar - * female vocal, male vocal	- Erhu solo - Sitar solo - Erhu + Sitar - Strings pizzicato - Grand unison @ end	

Pu

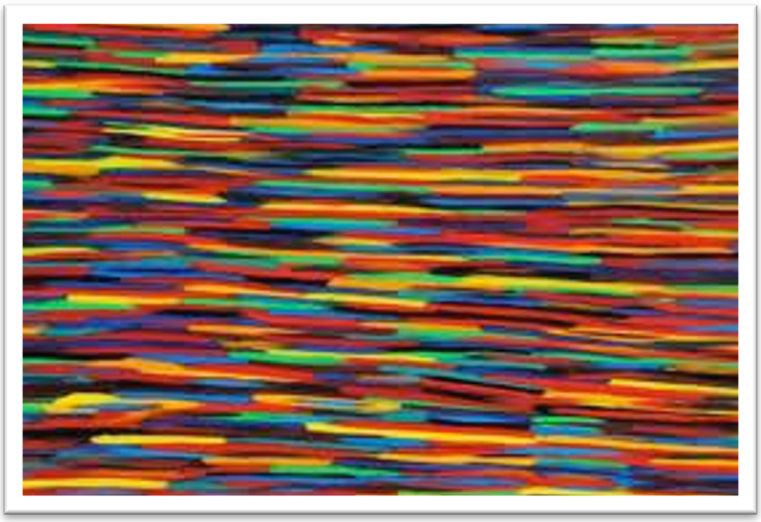
	Title	Line Up (UK)	Line Up (Malaysian)	Highlights	Remarks
4	Variasi Joget Pahang	Strings, WW, Brass	- Gendang 1, Gendang - Seruling, Accordion, Gambus, Erhu - Toys, Sitar - *Violin *asli* solo	- Strings section feature - Seruling solo - Erhu solo - Sitar solo - Violin *asli* solo - WW section feature - Brass build up - Melody *Tutti*	- Strings section - WW section
5	Fantasia Endang	Strings, WW, Brass	- Gendang 1, Gendang 2 - Erhu - Toys, Sitar	- Erhu solo - Violin solo - Sitar melody - Trumpet solo - Clarinet solo - Polyphonic *Tutti*	
6	Jambatan Tamparuli	Strings, WW, Brass (no Trombone)	- Bonang, Percussion - N/A - Toys	- Bonang solo - Flugelhorn solo - Strings section	Flugelhorn solo

Appendix 5 The Spectrum of Colours



Electromagnetic Spectrum (from www.scienceclarified.com, accessed on 14 May 2013)

Spectrum of the Sky HD Wall Paper - Nature and Landscape (from onlyhdwallpapers.com, accessed on 14 May 2013)



From www.elizabethdawsonfineart.com, accessed on 14 May 2013

Abstract Spectrum Background (from www.wallgc.com, accessed on 14 May 2013)

Appendix 6 Works Catalog (January 2010 – October 2012)

2012 ‘Simfonika 1Malaysia’ (compositions based on Malaysian folk songs/dance)

(1 Seruling, 1 Sitar, 1 Erhu, 1 Accordion, 1 Rebana, 1 Bonang, 1 Violin Asli, 1 Sape, 1 Gambus, 1 female vocal, 9 Violins, 3 Violas, 3 Cellos, 1 Contrabass, 1 Flute, 1 Oboe, 1 Clarinet, 1 Bassoon, 1 Trumpet, 2 Horns, 1 Trombone)

Joget Pahang

Jambatan Tamparuli

Puteri Santubong

Variasi Boria

Versi Tarian Endang

2012 ‘Mo Li Hua’ Concert with Urban Big Band

(1 Pekin, 1 Baron, 1 Demung, 1 Kenong, 1 Rebana, 1 Bonang, 4 trumpets, 4 trombones, 5 saxophones, rhythm section)

Mo Li Hua (based on Chinese folk, arrangement)

Lenggang Kangkung (based on Malaysian folk, arrangement)

‘F’ (original)

Vanilla (original)

Cavatina (from ‘The Deer Hunter’, arrangement)

Price Tag (UK pop, arrangement)

2011 Pipa Rhapsody (original)

(1 Pipa, 2 Violins, 1 Viola, 1 Cello)

2011 ‘Ti Oh Oh’ with University of Sheffield Chinese Orchestra

(2 Pipa, 1 Liu Qin, 1 Zhong Ruan, 2 Erhu, 2 Percussion, 1 Tabla)

‘Ti Oh Oh’ Taiwanese folk melody

2010 ‘Urban Big Band plays Isabella Pek’s New Works’

(4 trumpets, 4 trombones, 5 saxophones, rhythm section)

Vanilla (original composition)

Dark Chocolate (original)

A Flugel Tune from Festive Suite (original)

Matt’s Boy (original)

Getaran Jiwa (arrangement)

Gunung Kinabalu (arrangement)

Cavatina (From ‘The Deer Hunter’, arrangement)

Esi Eisai H Aitia Pou Ipofero (Greek classic, arrangement)

2010 ‘12356’ (The Allegri String Quartet Workshop)

(2 Violins, Viola, Cello)

12356 MDX

12356 Fugal

12356 Largo

12356 Morph

2010 Composer Participant (Malaysian Philharmonic Orchestra),

MPO Forumplus Phase II

(Full Strings, 2 trumpets, 2 trombones, 2 horns, 2 flutes, 2 oboes, 2 clarinets, 2 Bassoons, Percussion)

The Festive Suite

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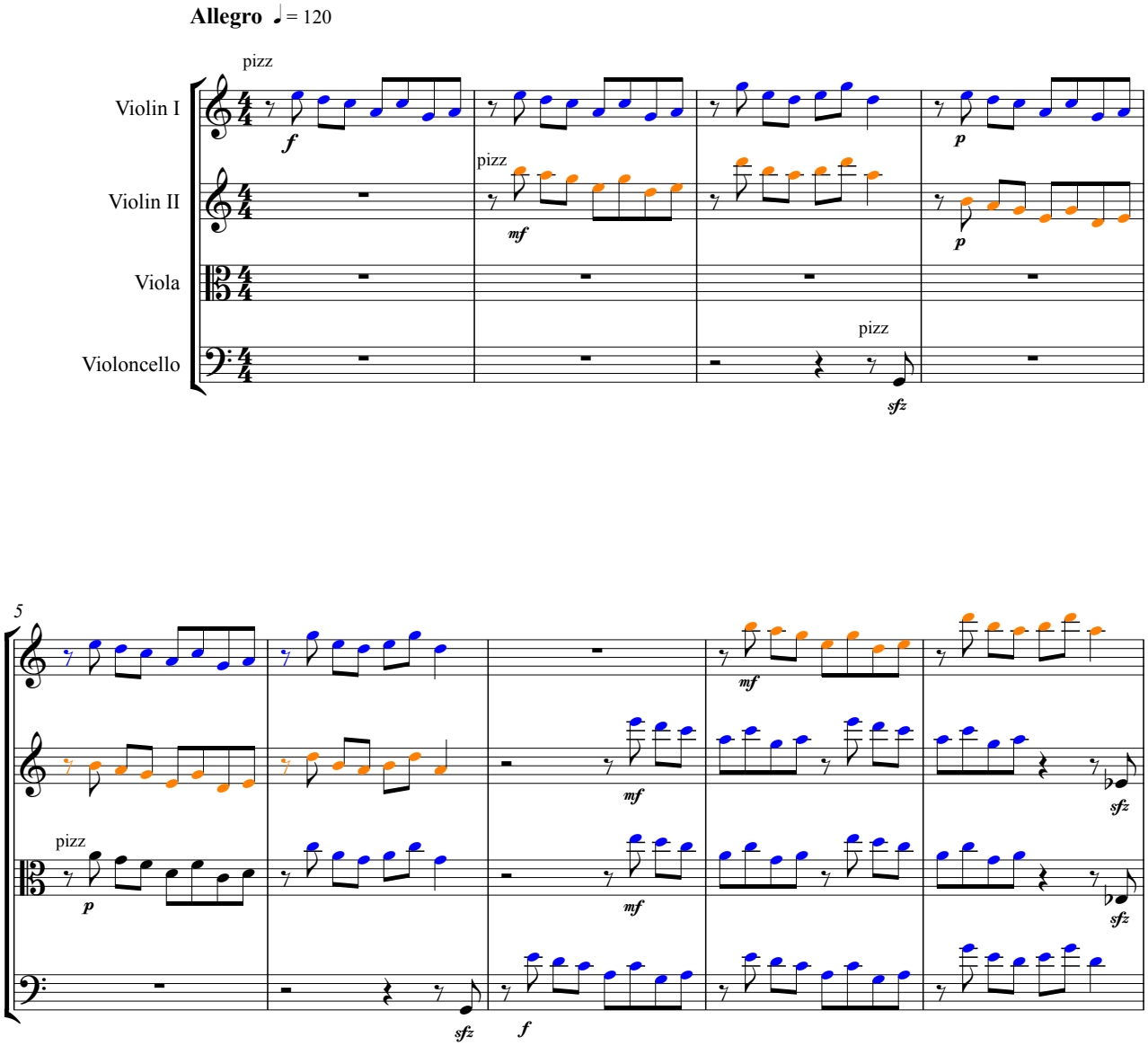
Isabella Pek

March 2010



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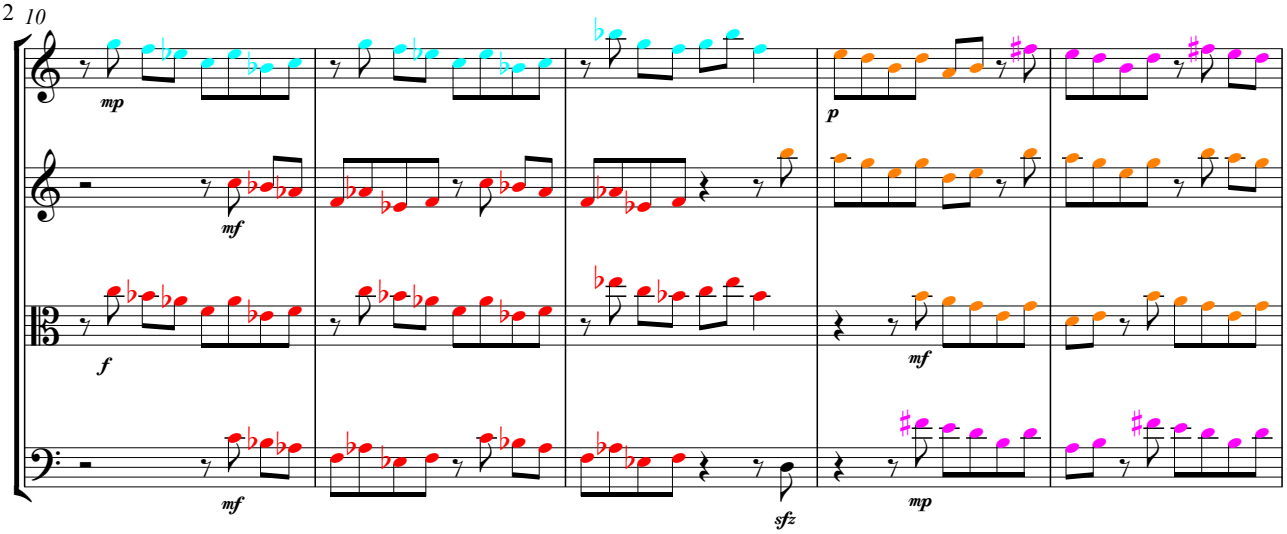
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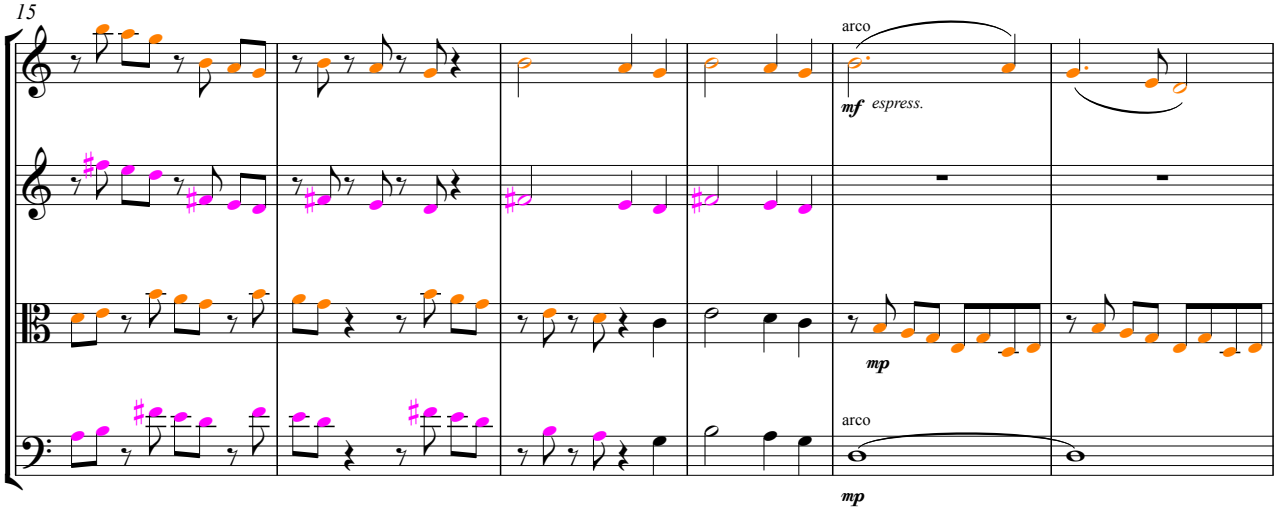
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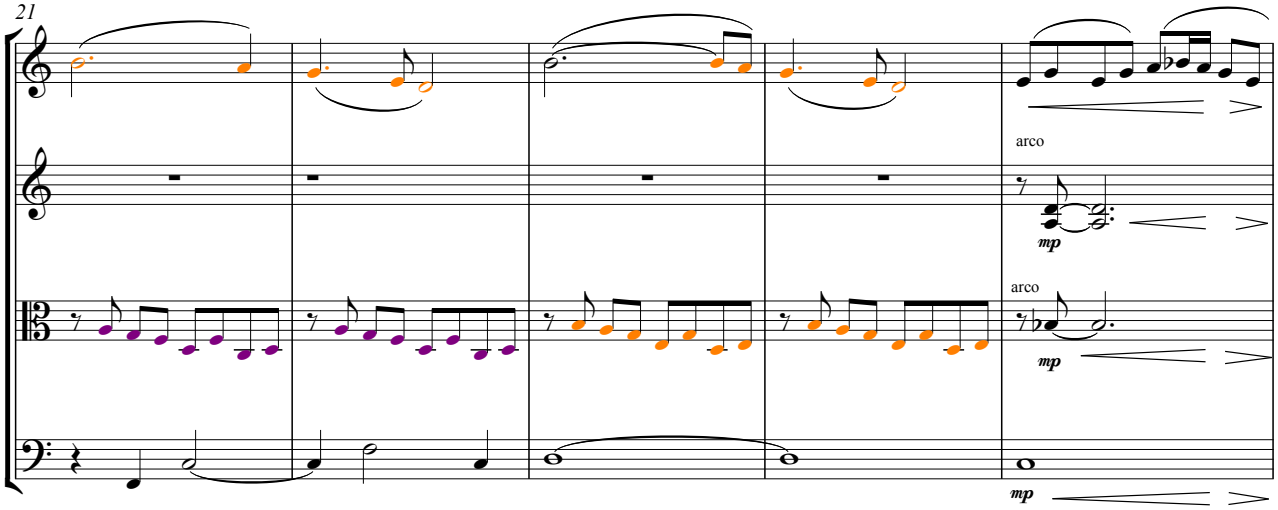
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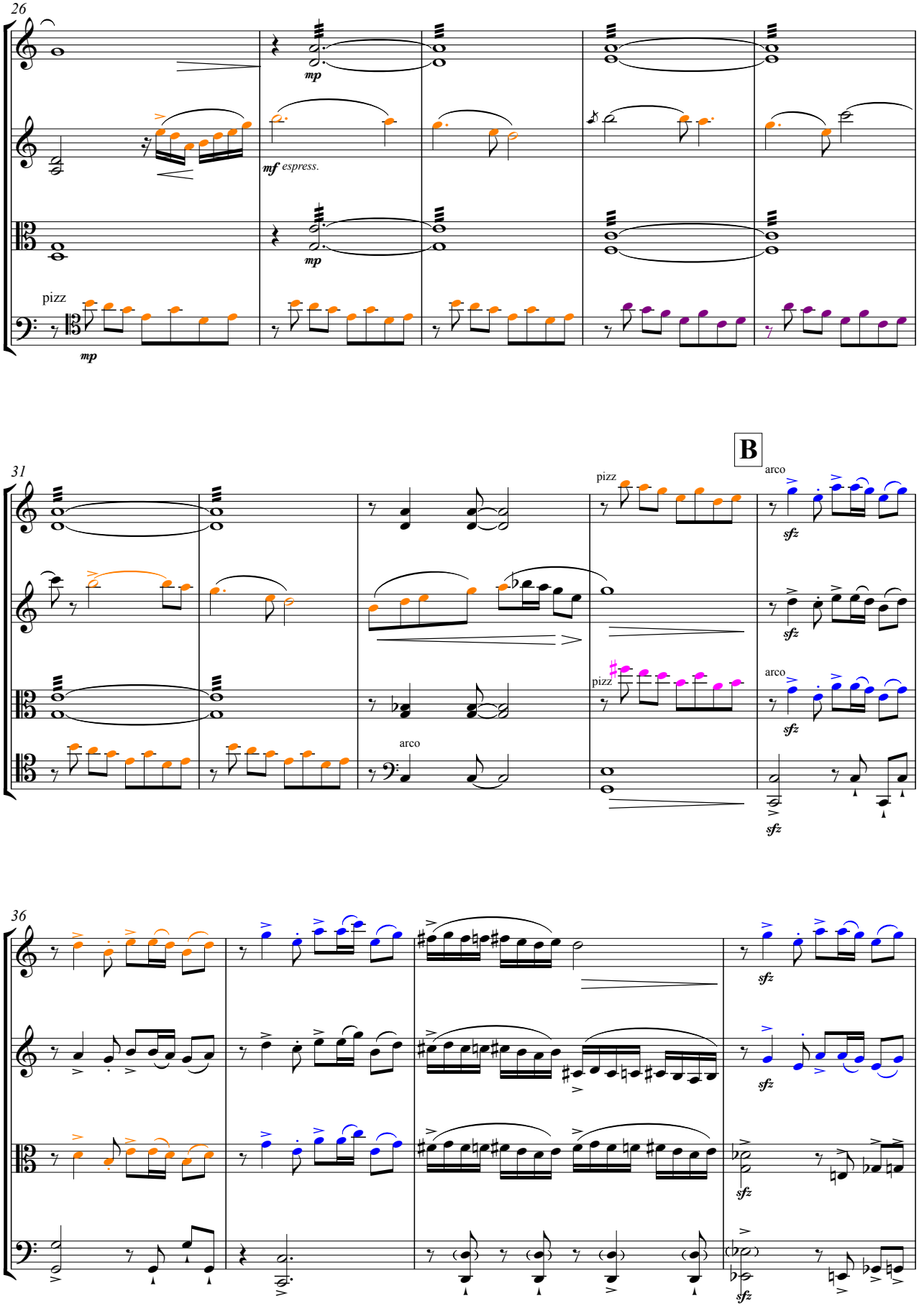
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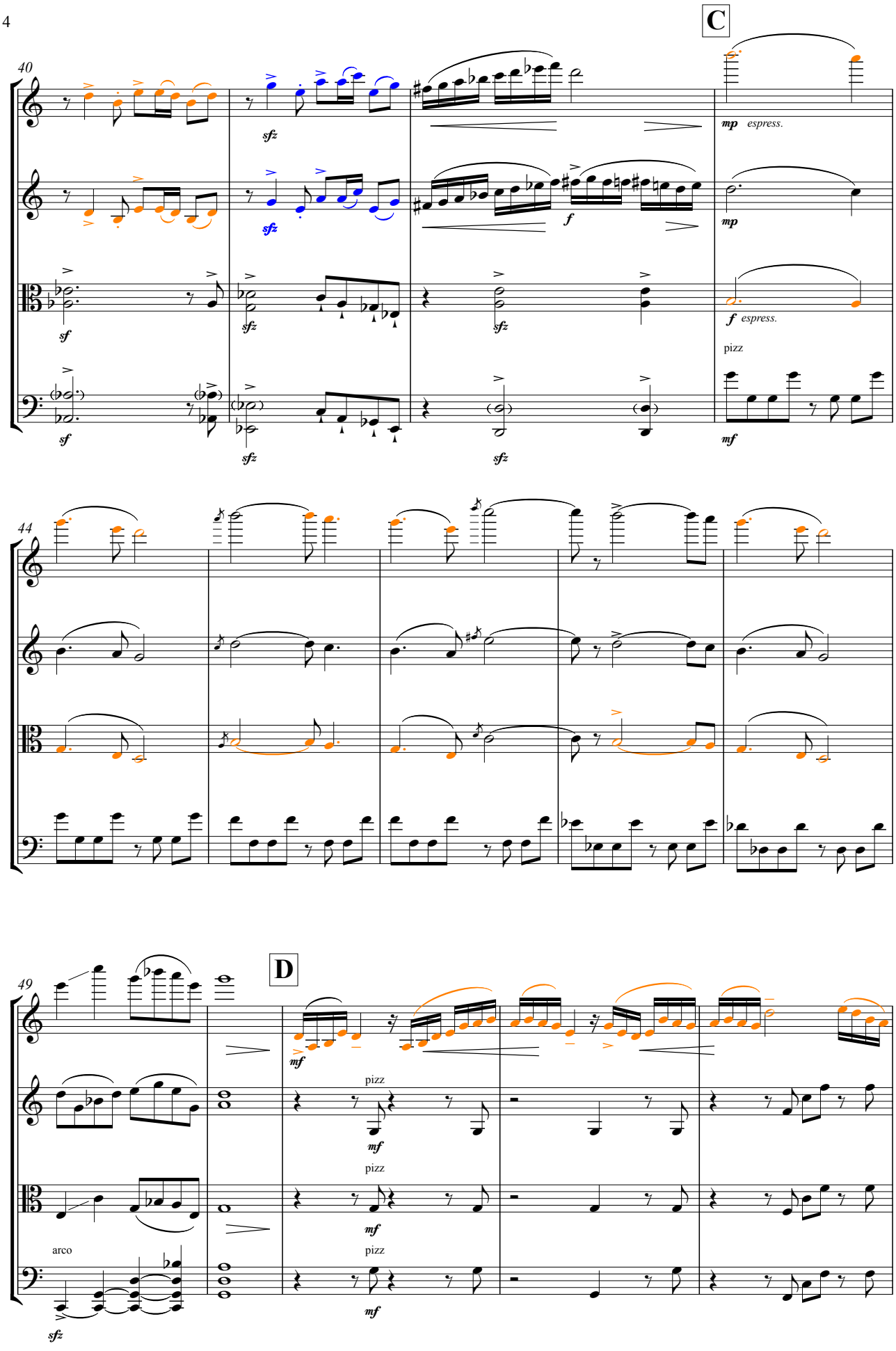
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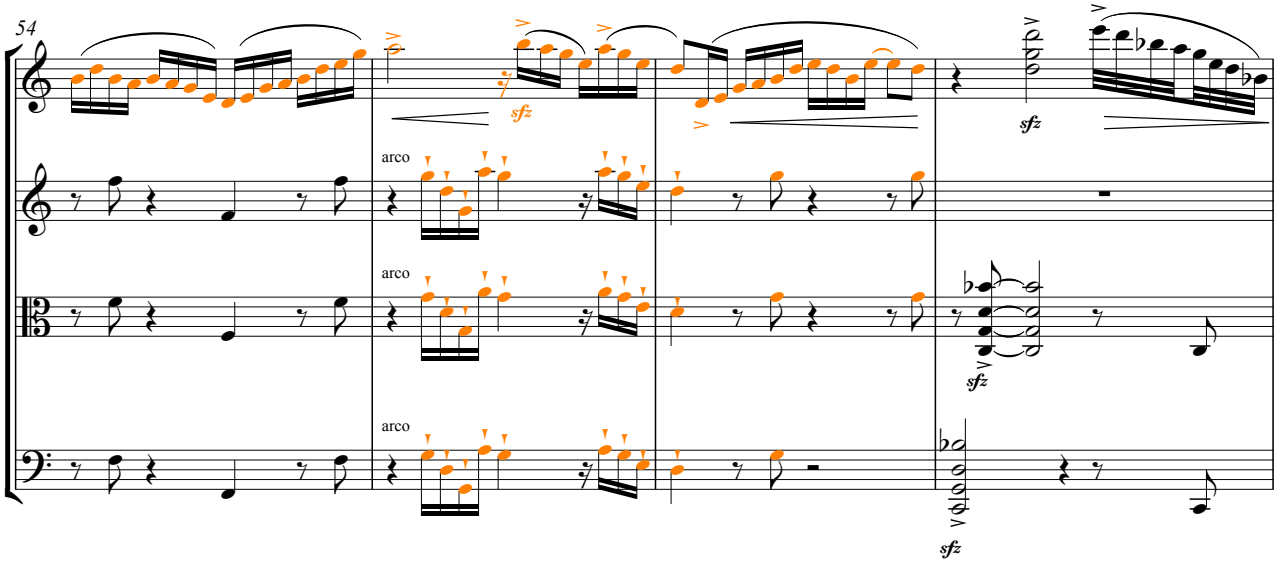
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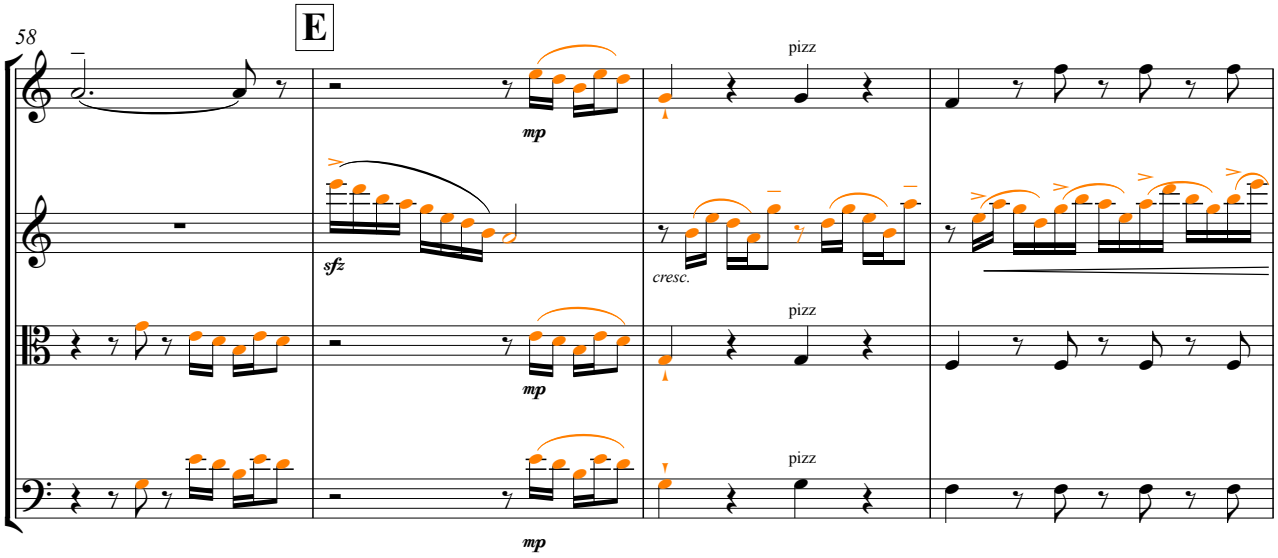
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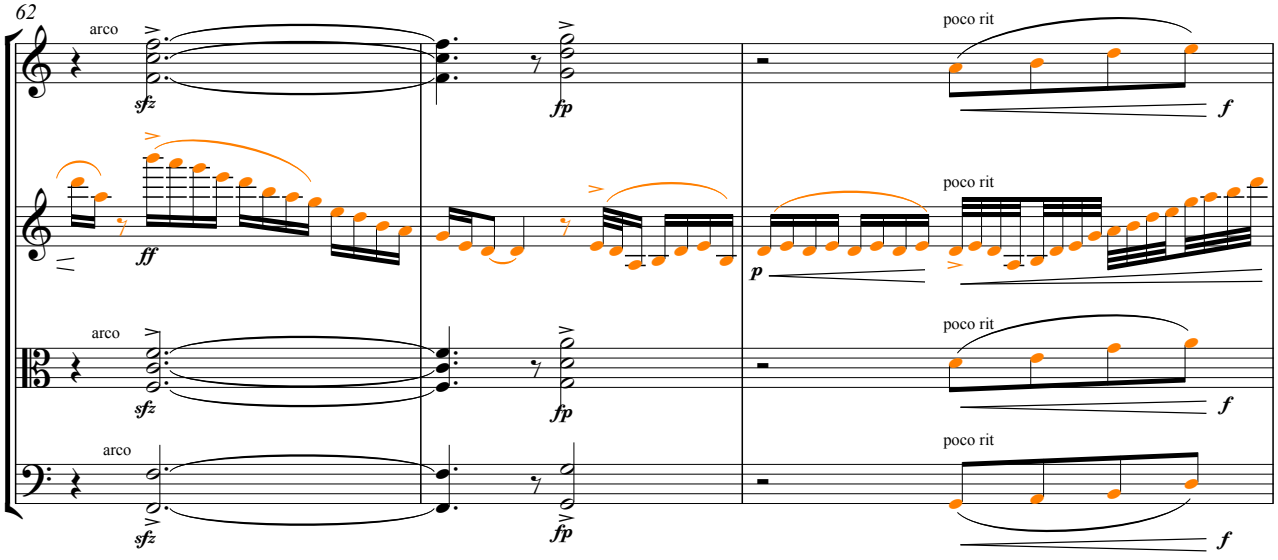
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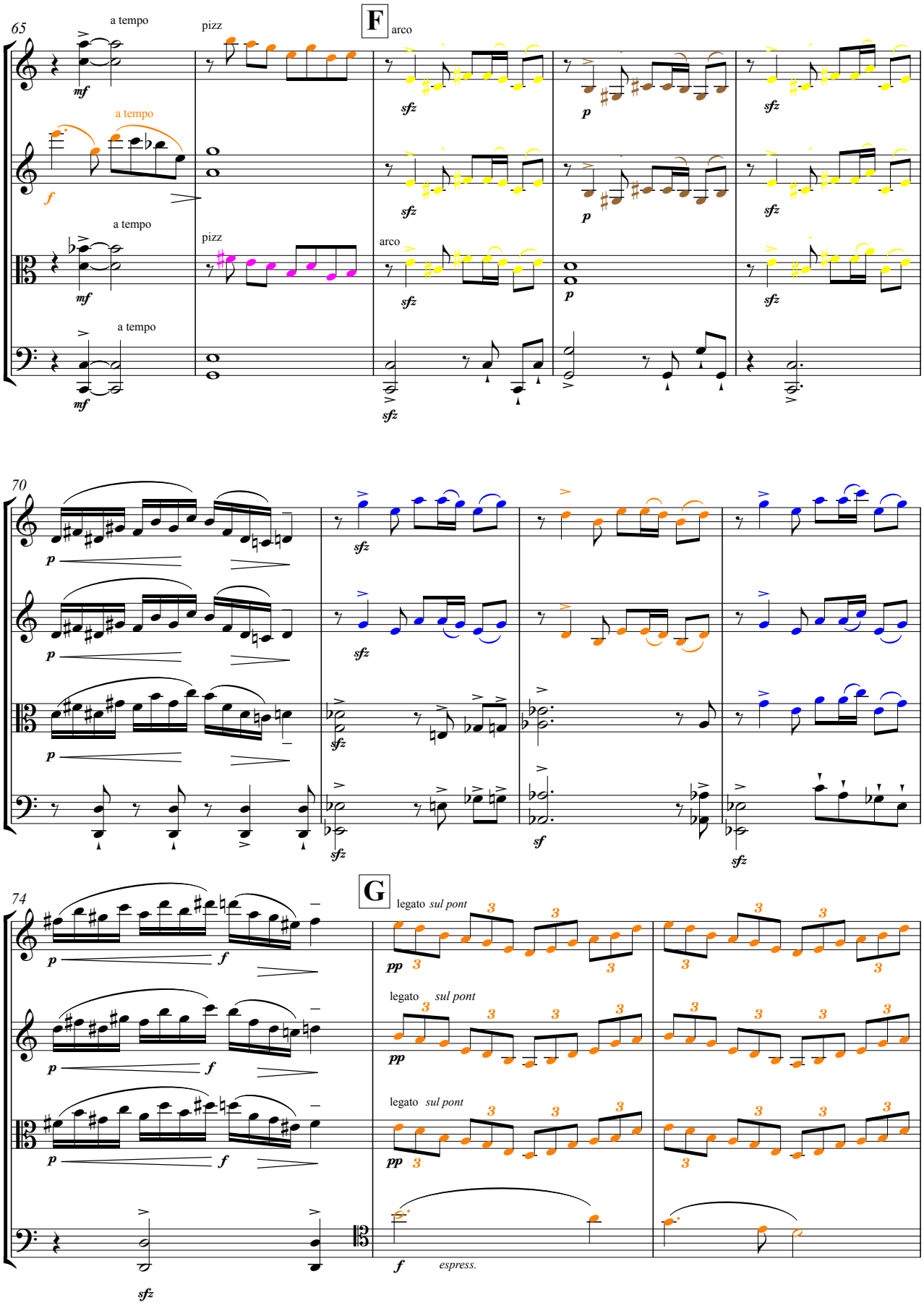
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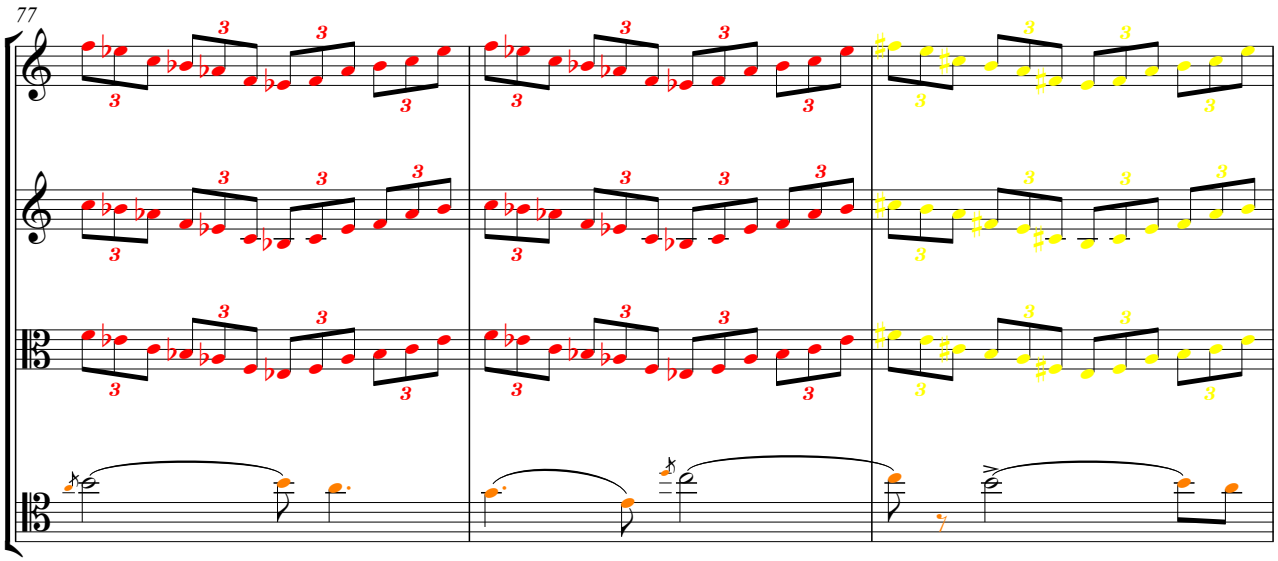
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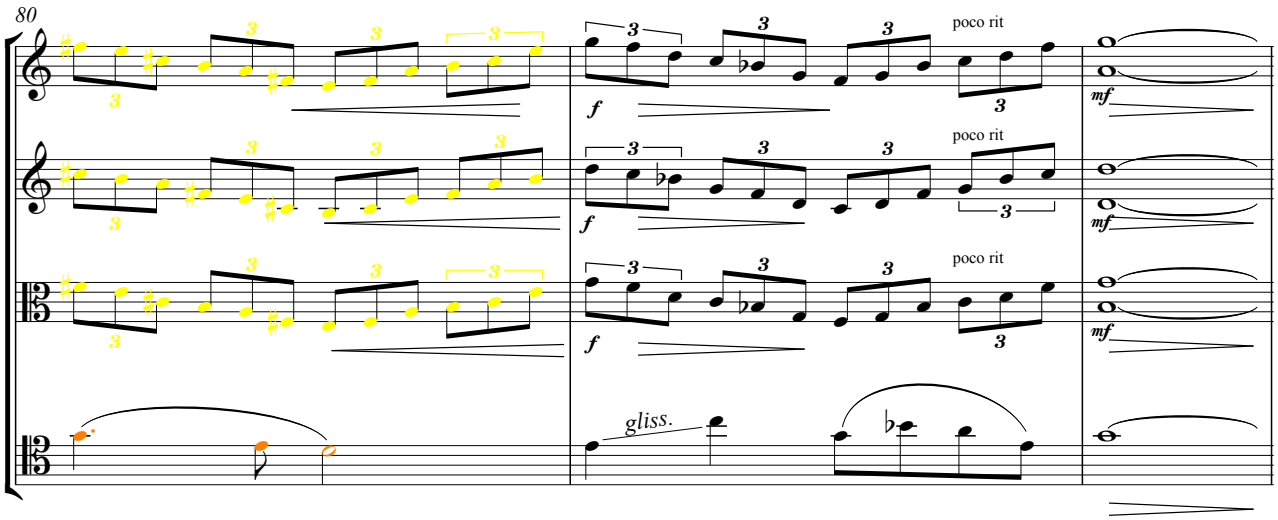
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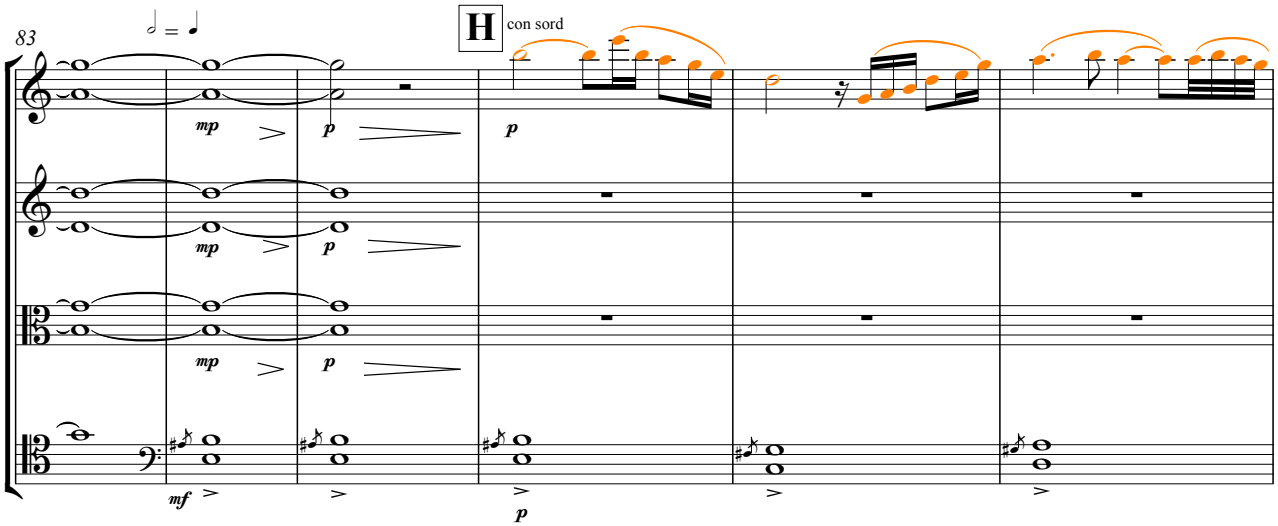
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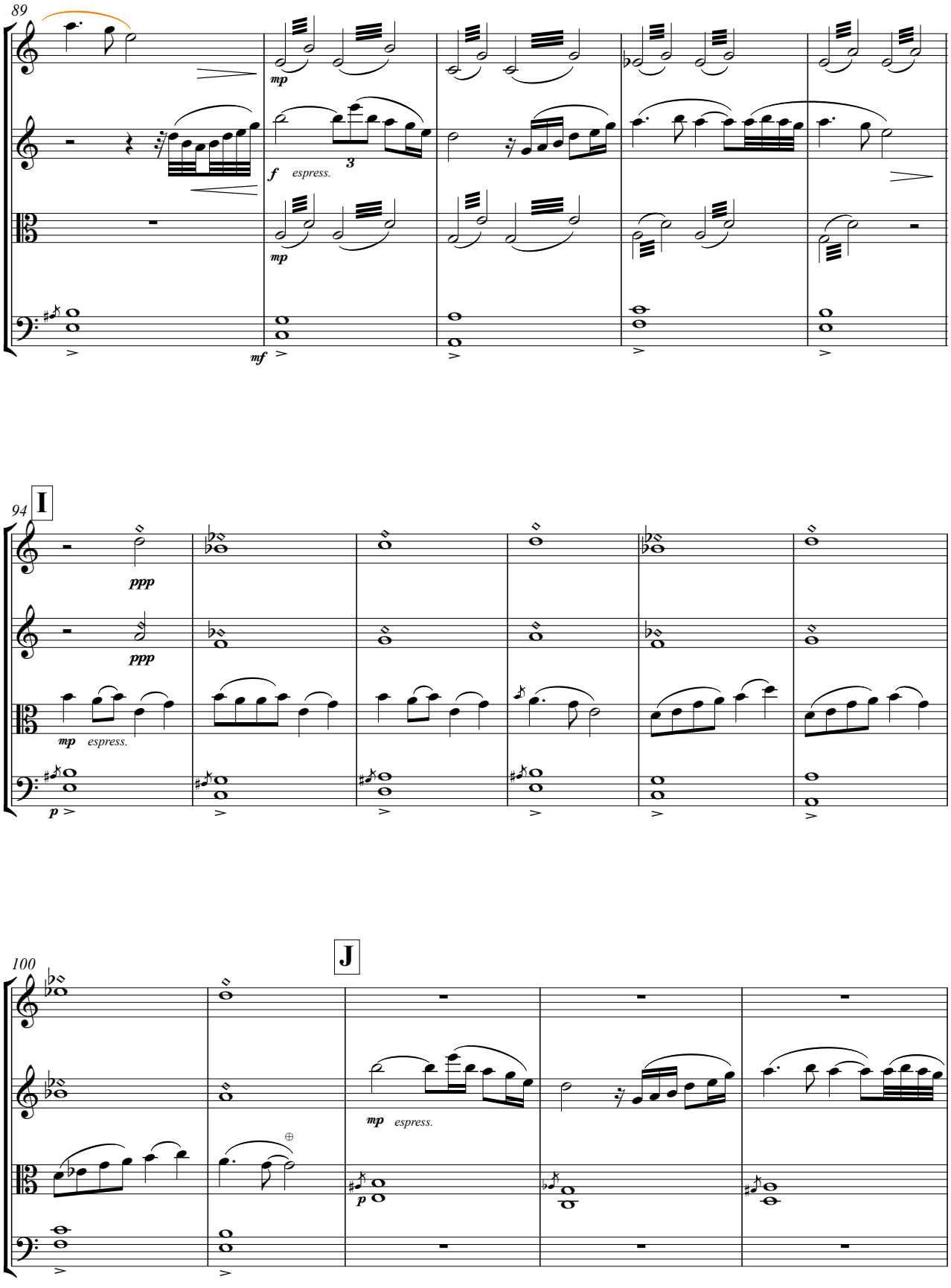
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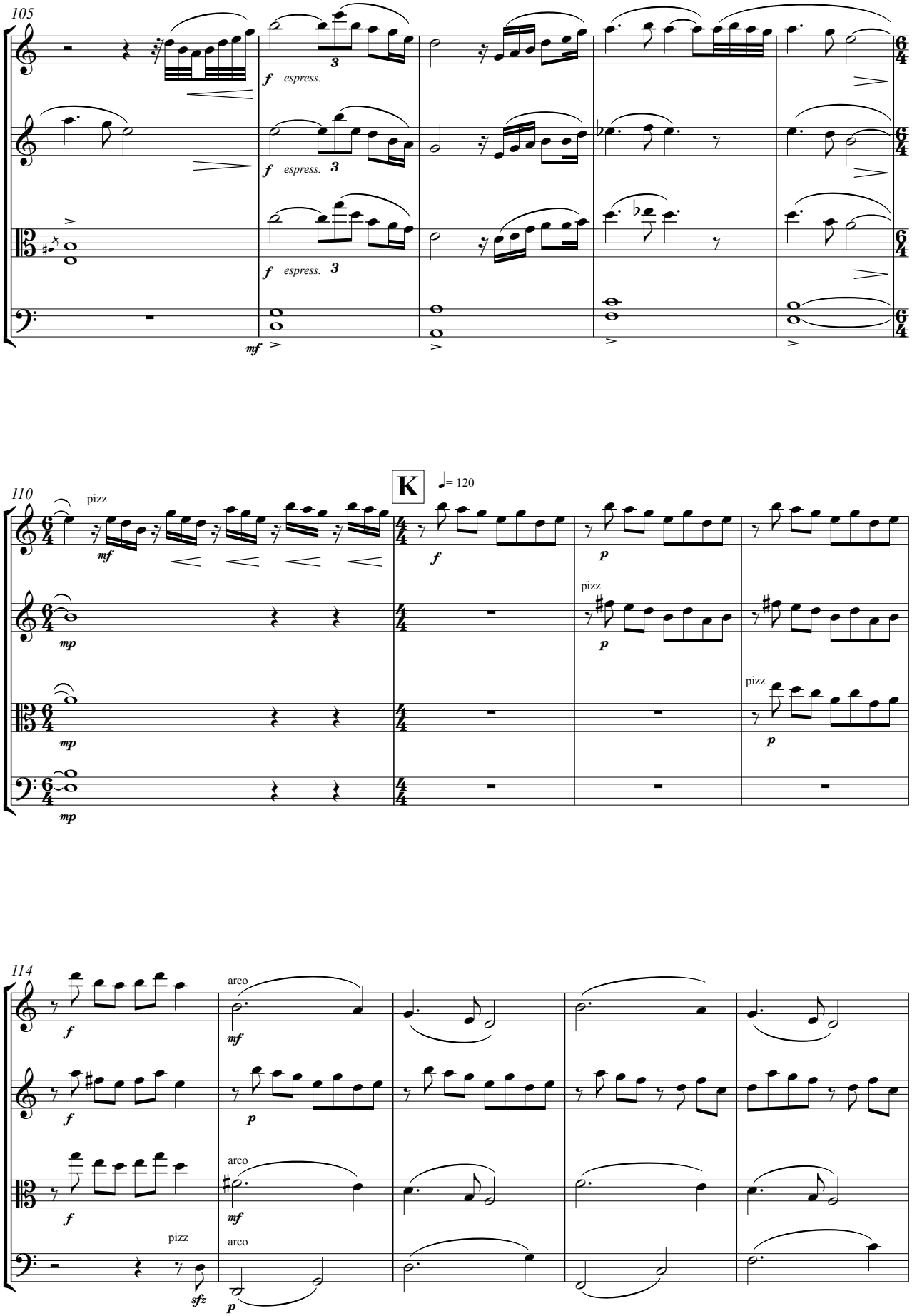
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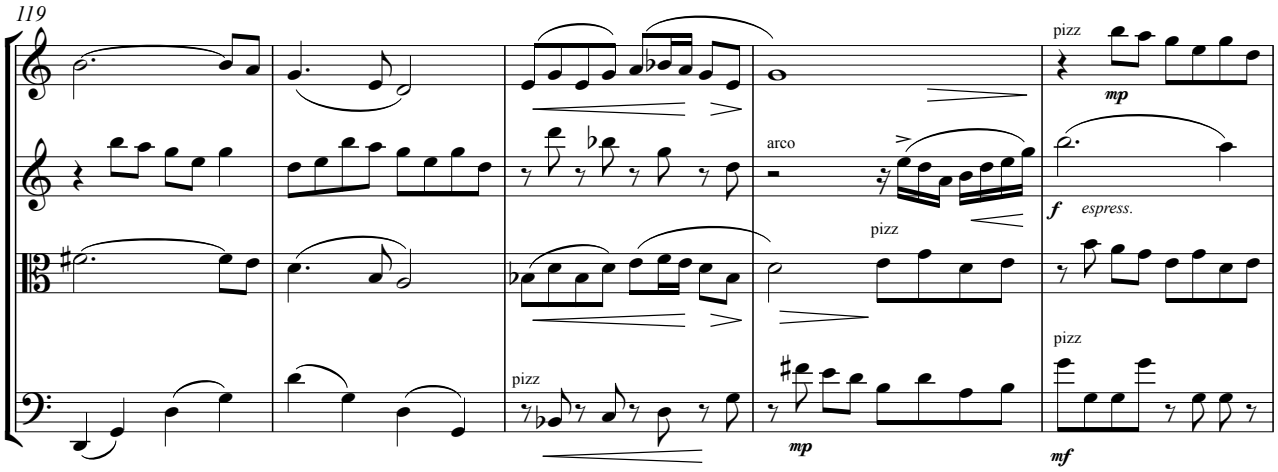
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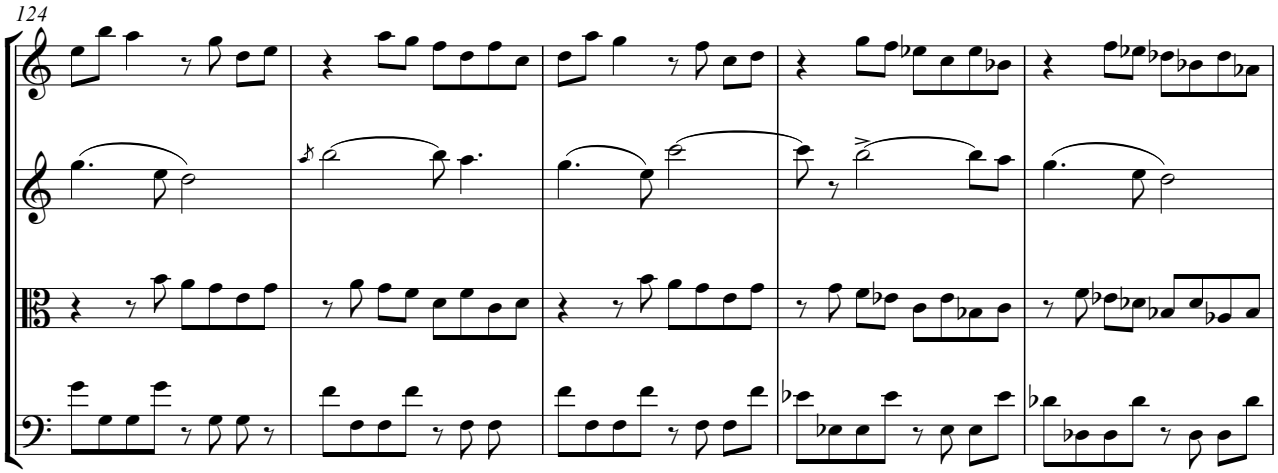
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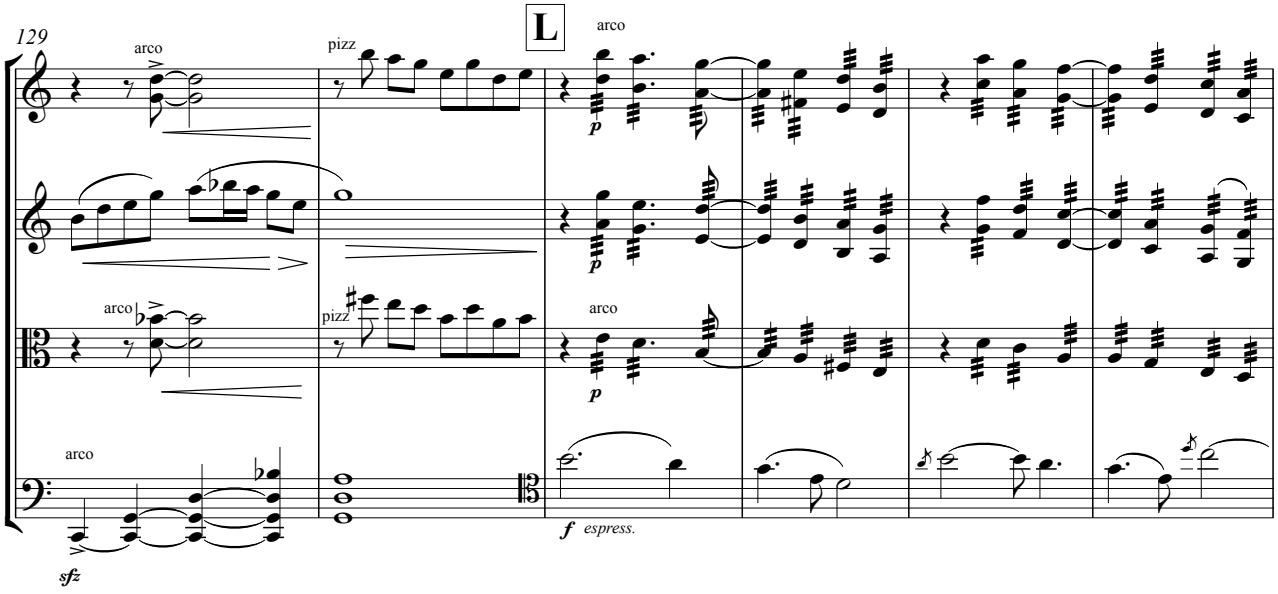
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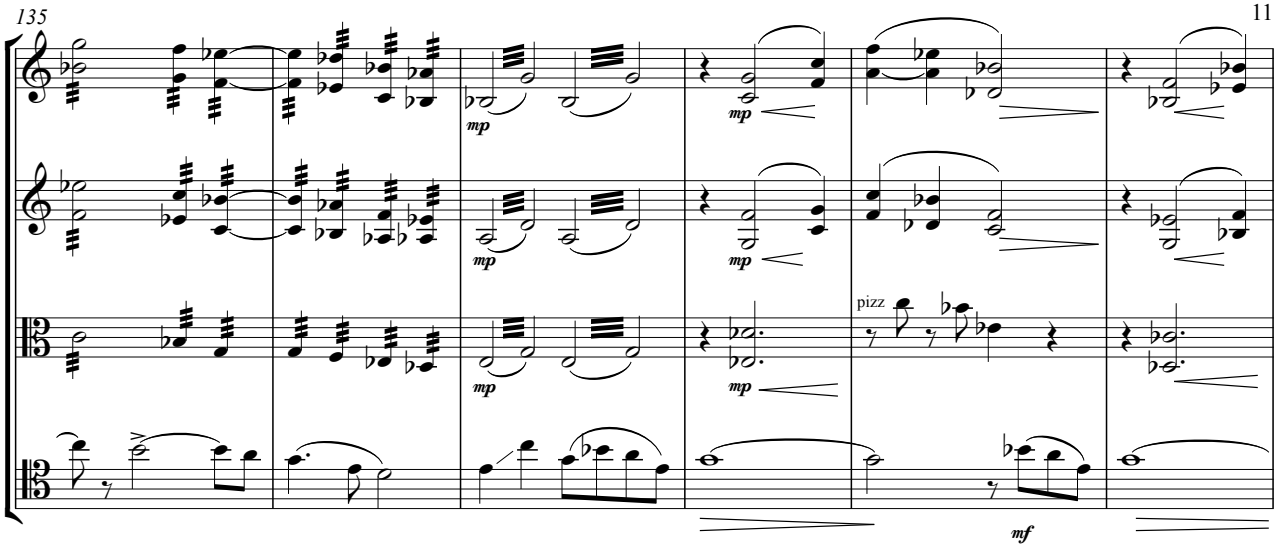
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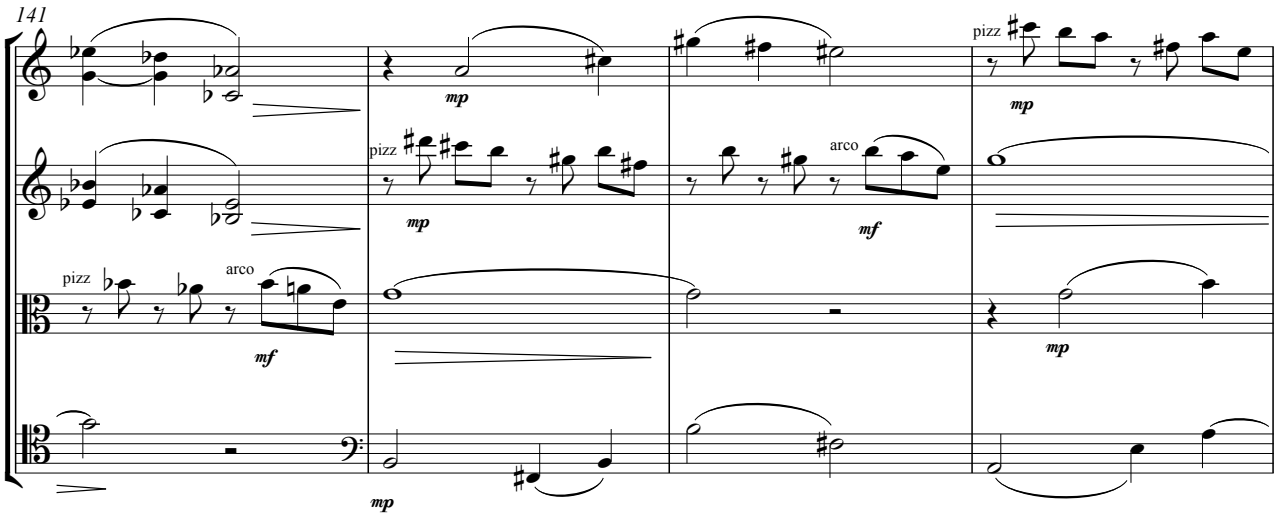
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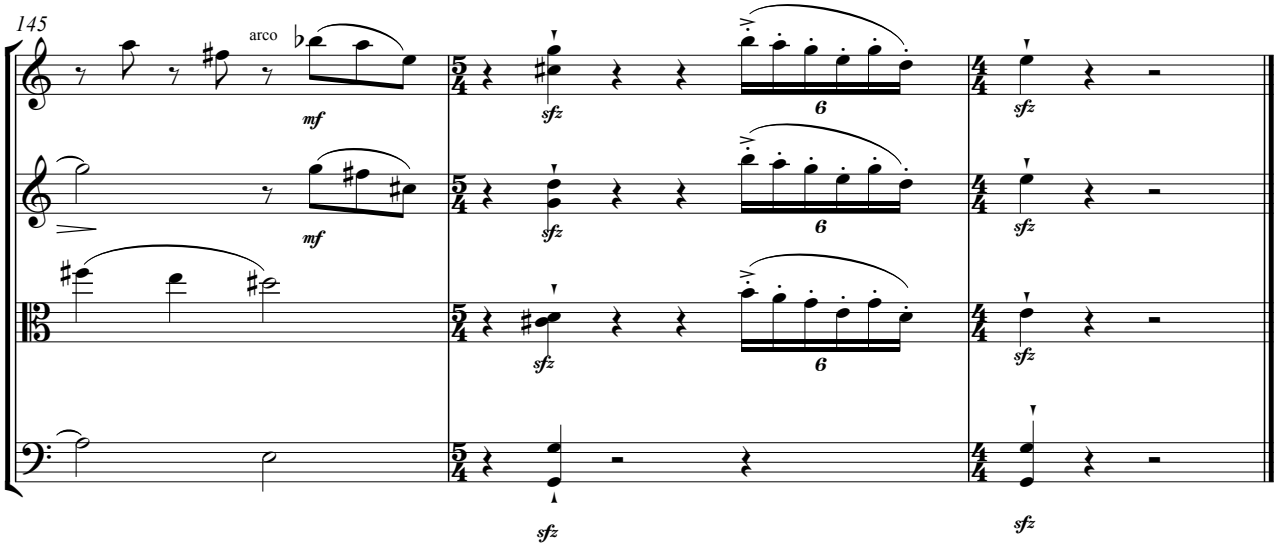
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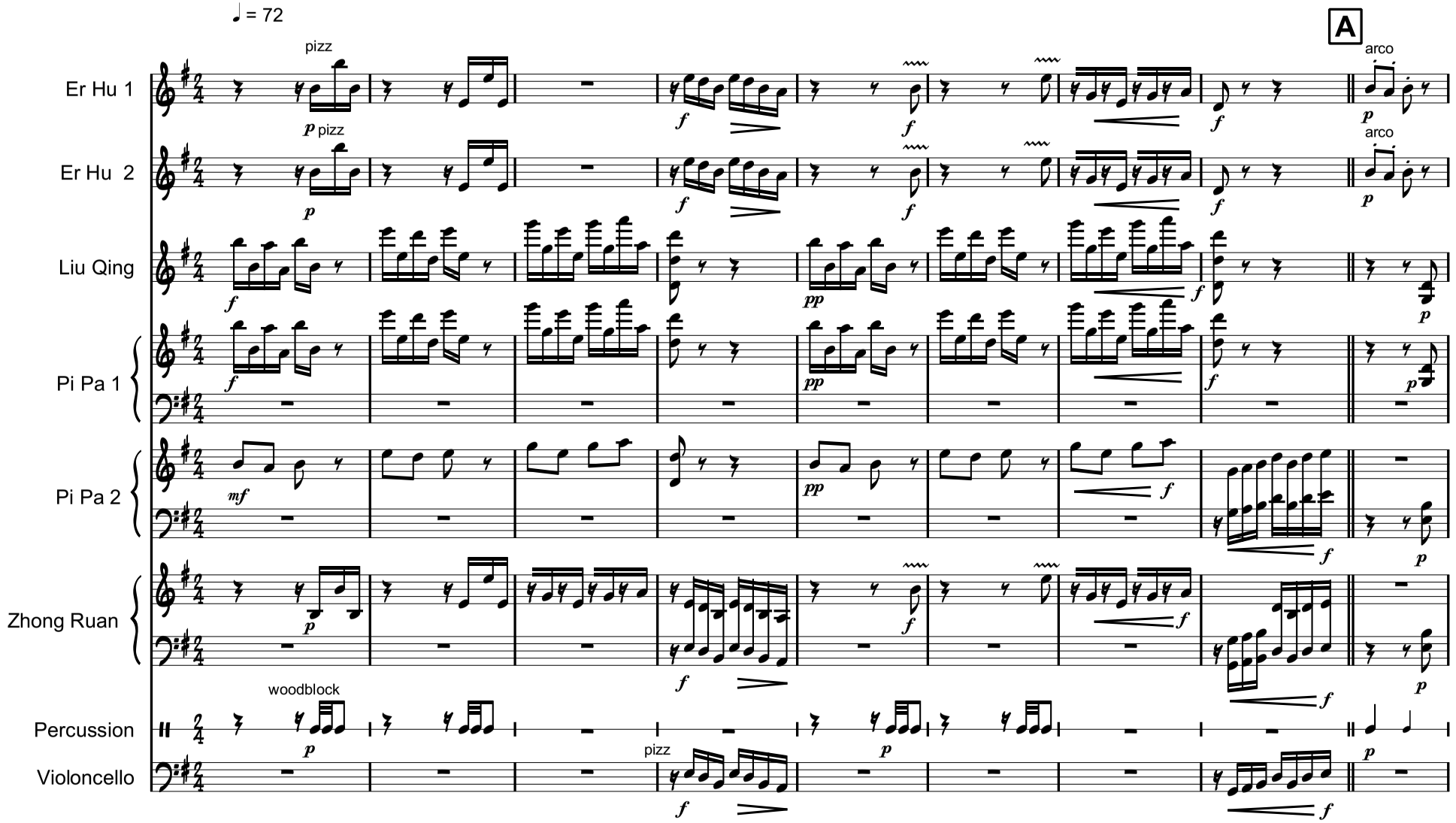
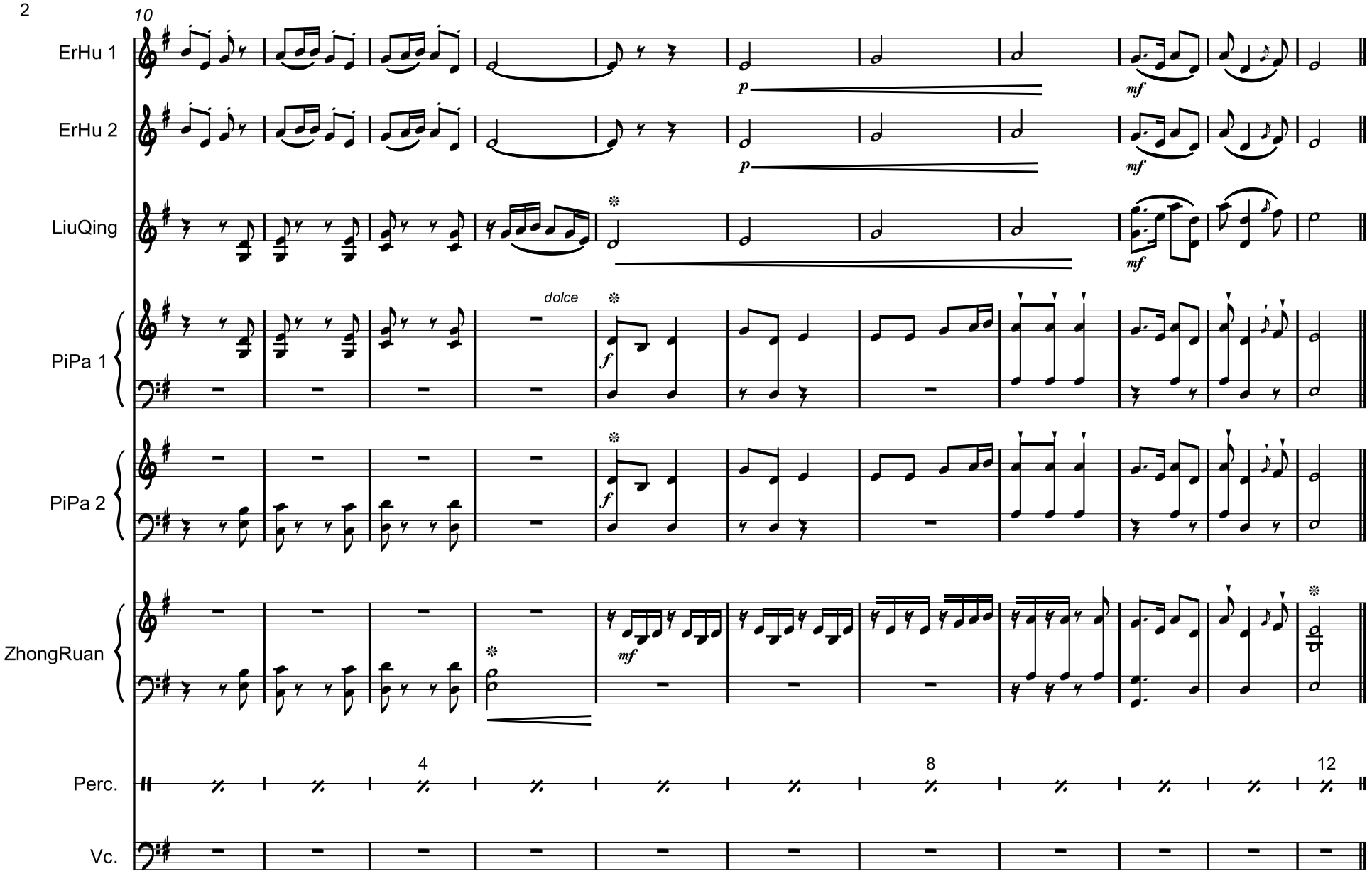
TI OH OH

Taiwanese Traditional Folk
Arranged by Isabella Pek
March 2011

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LiuQing
PiPa 1
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ZhongRuan
Perc.
Vc.
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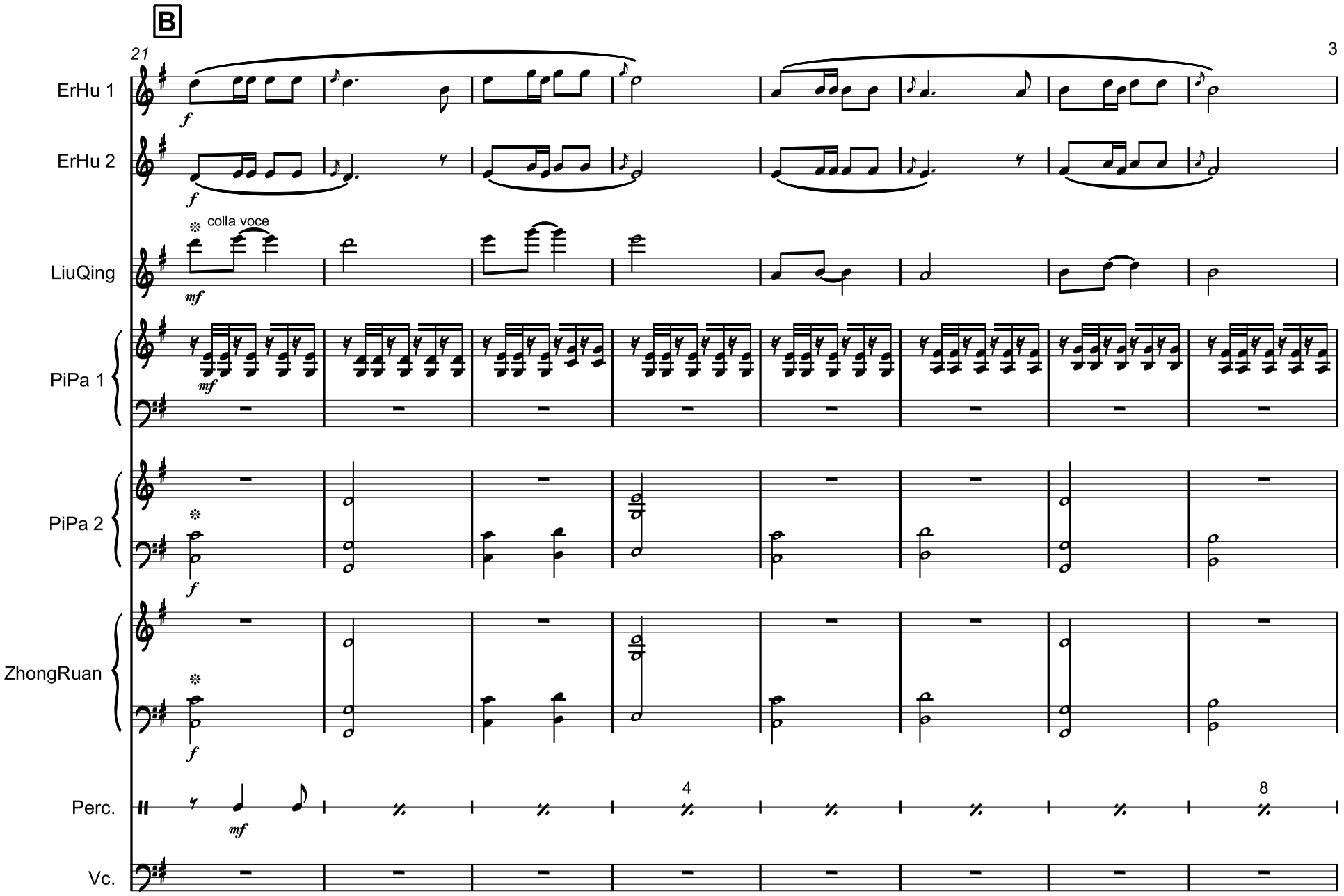
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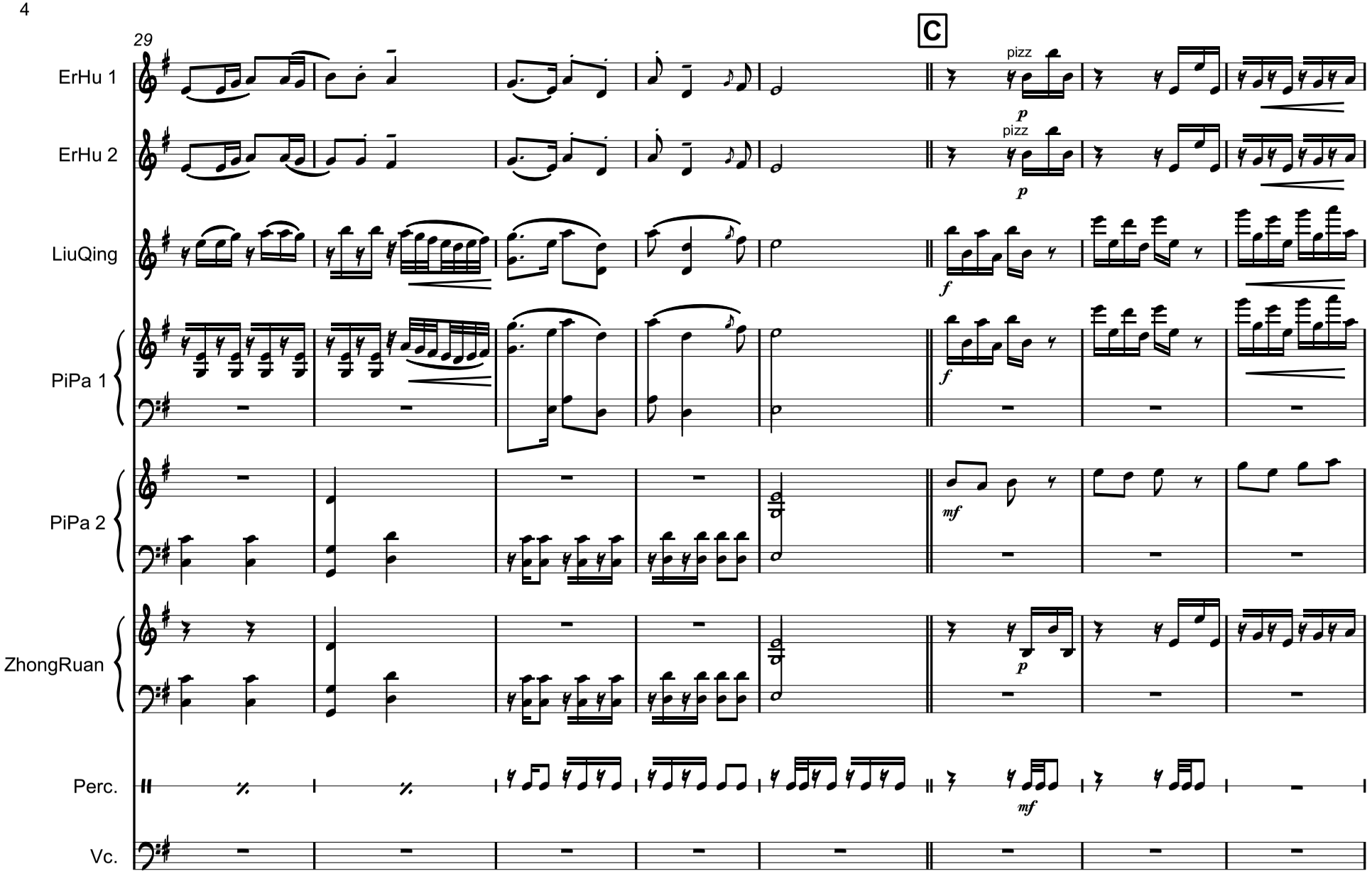
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LiuQing
PiPa 1
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ZhongRuan
Perc.
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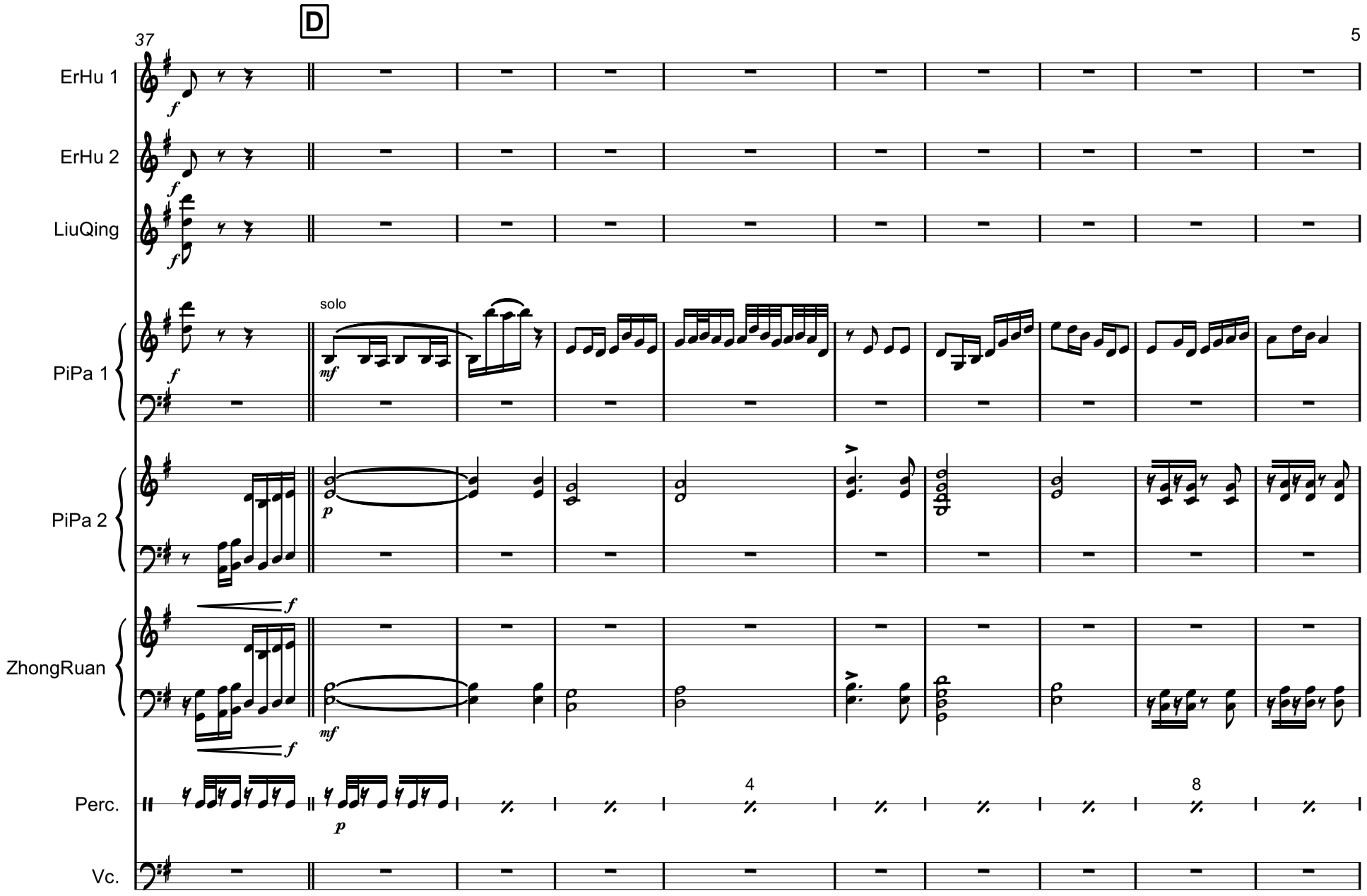
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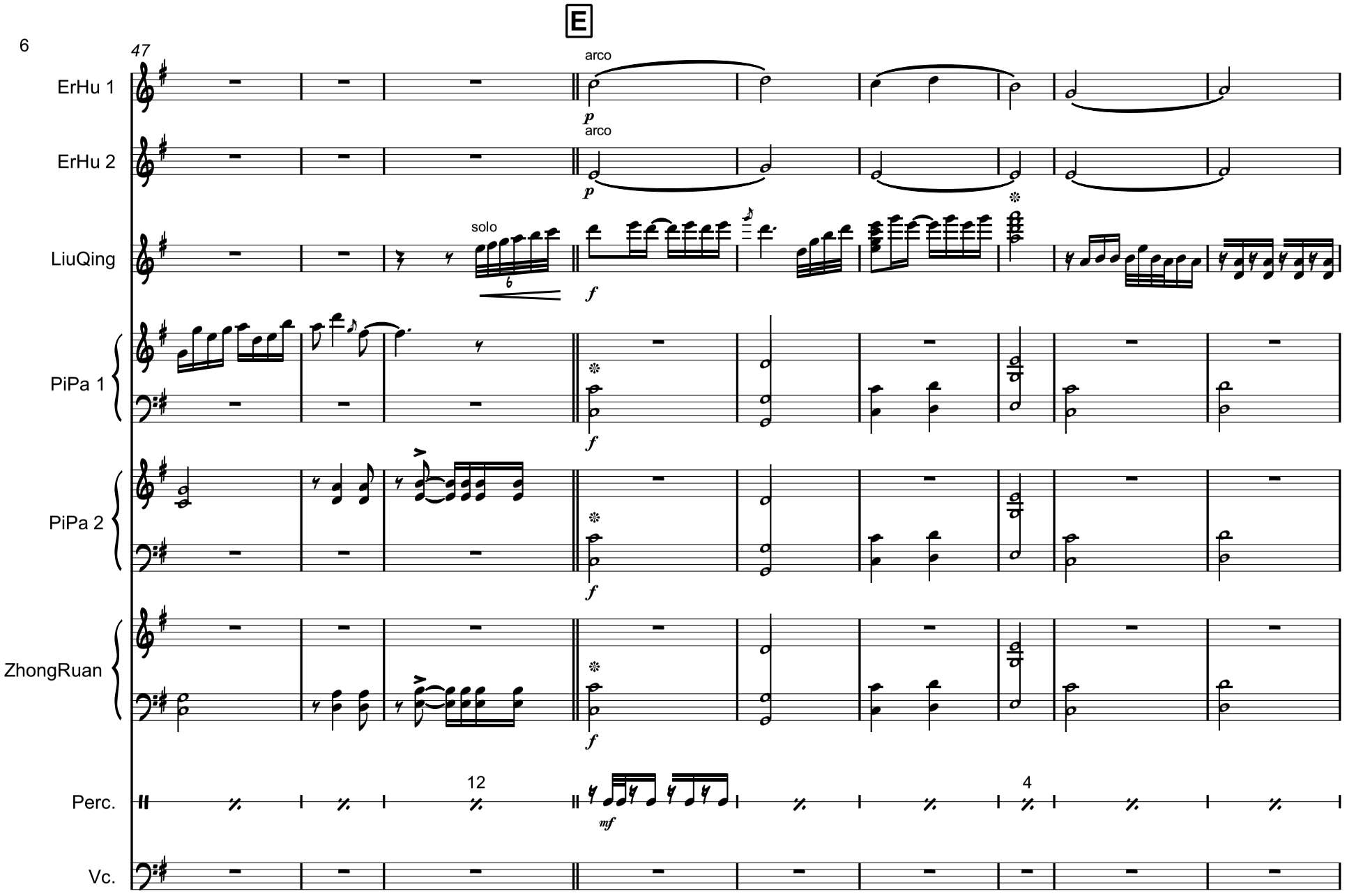
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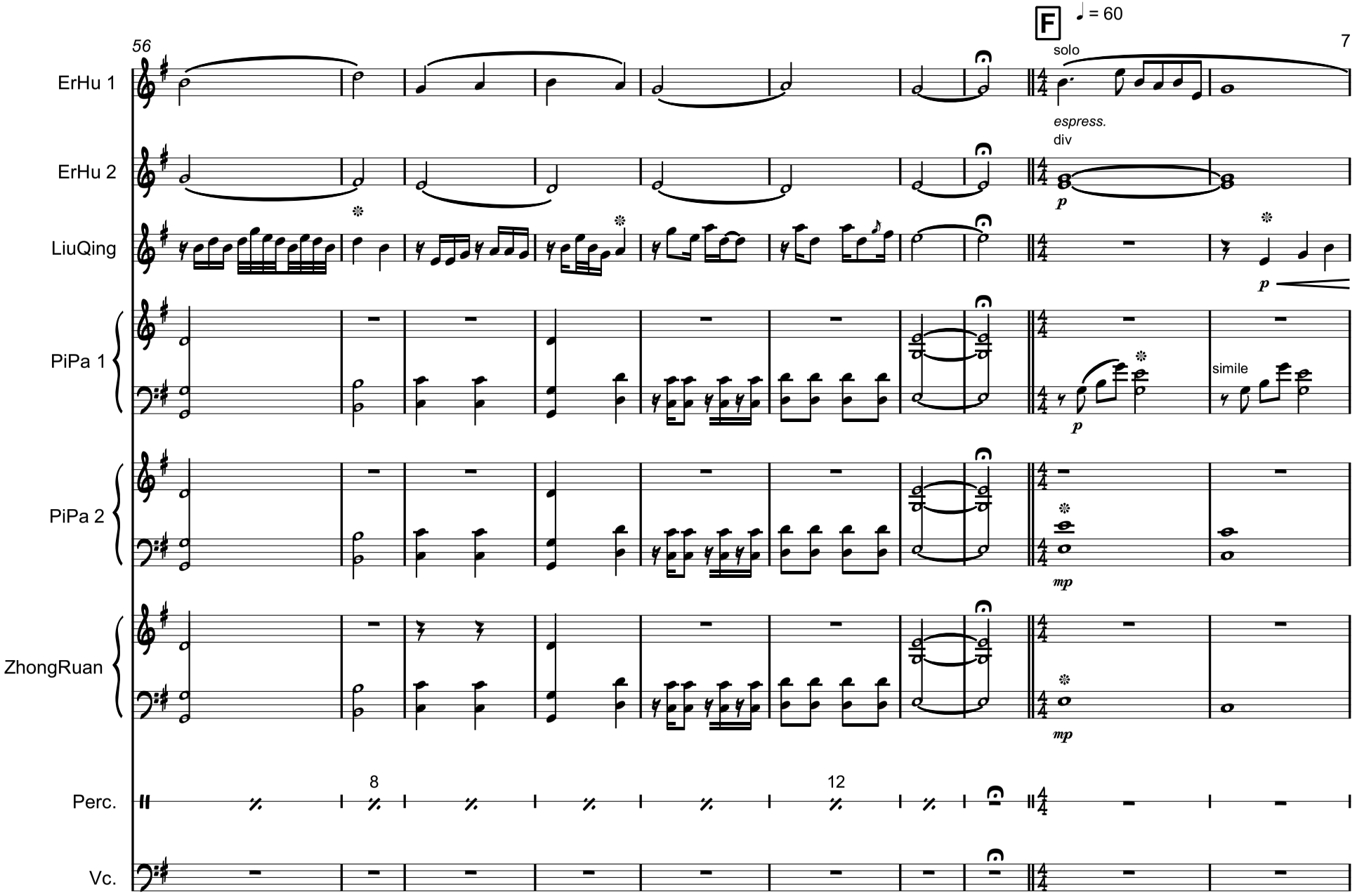
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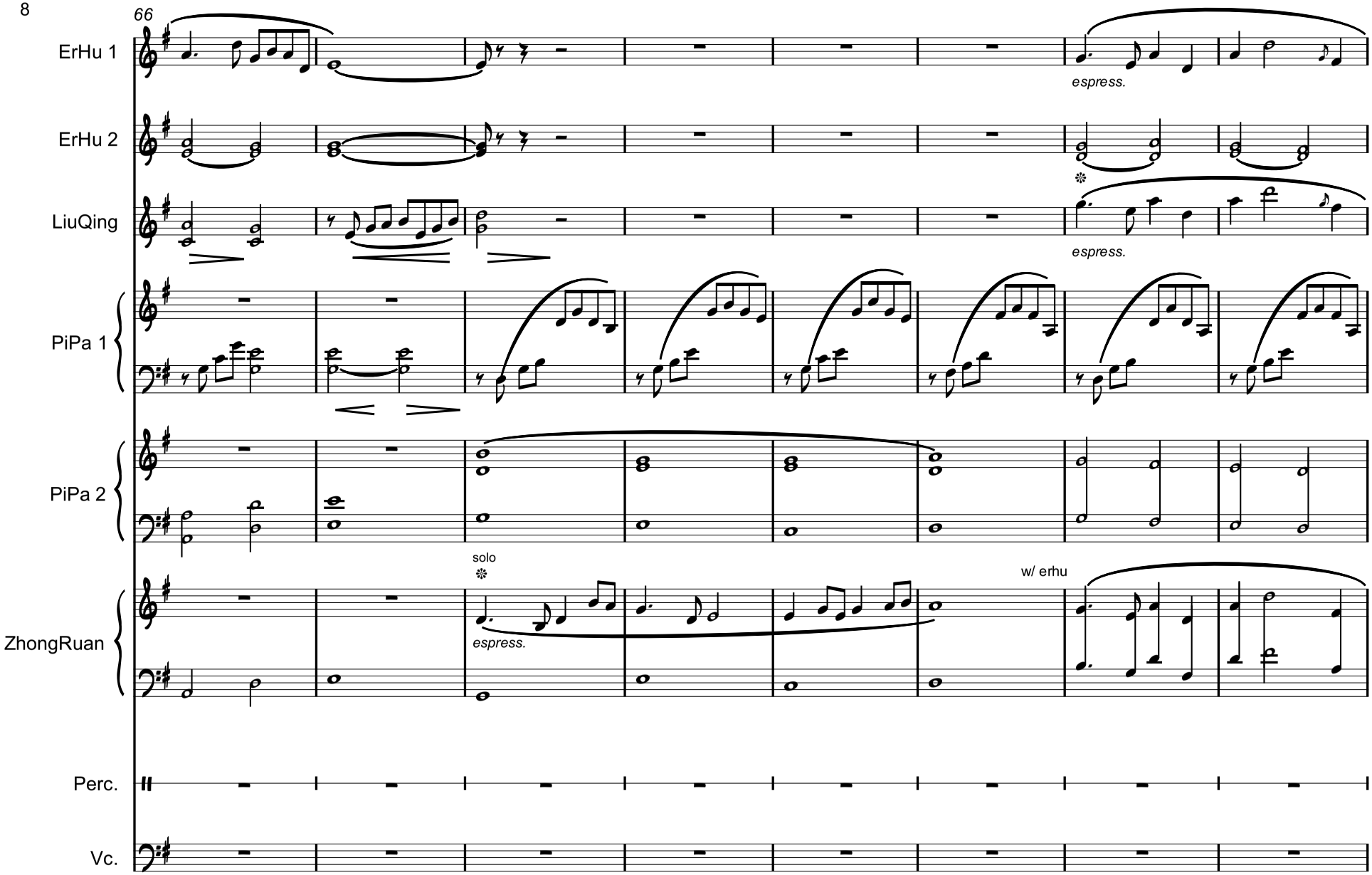
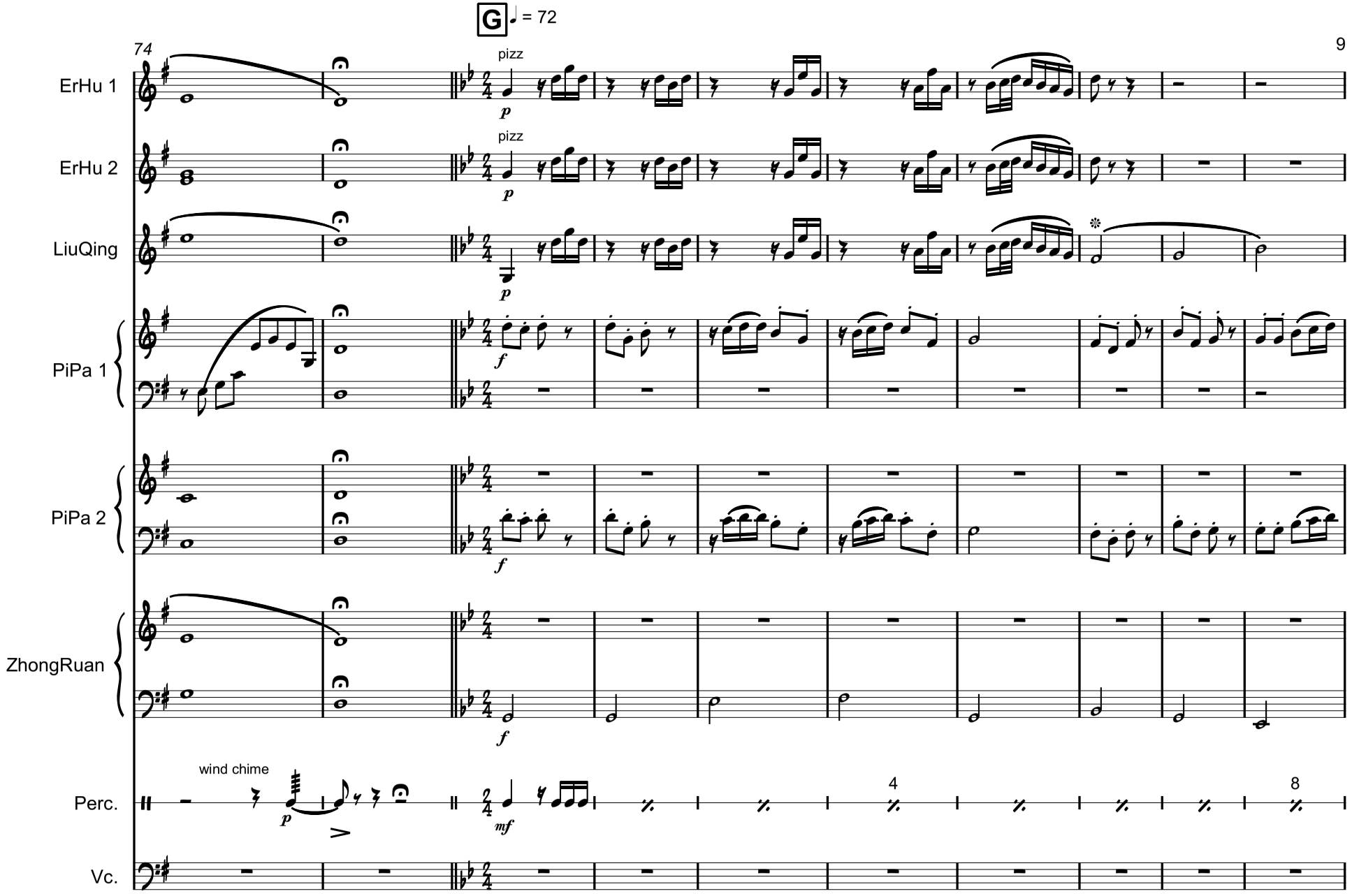
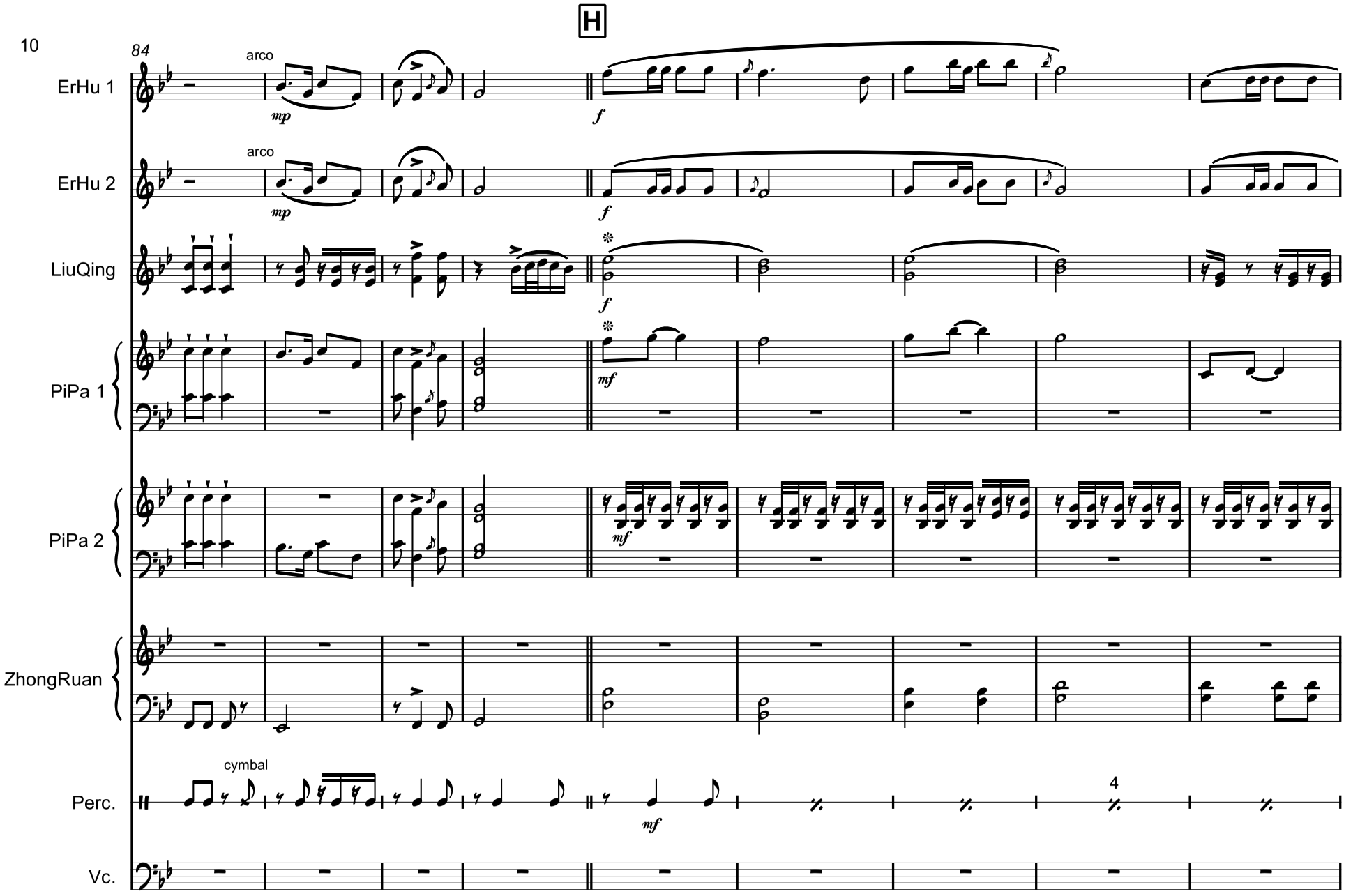
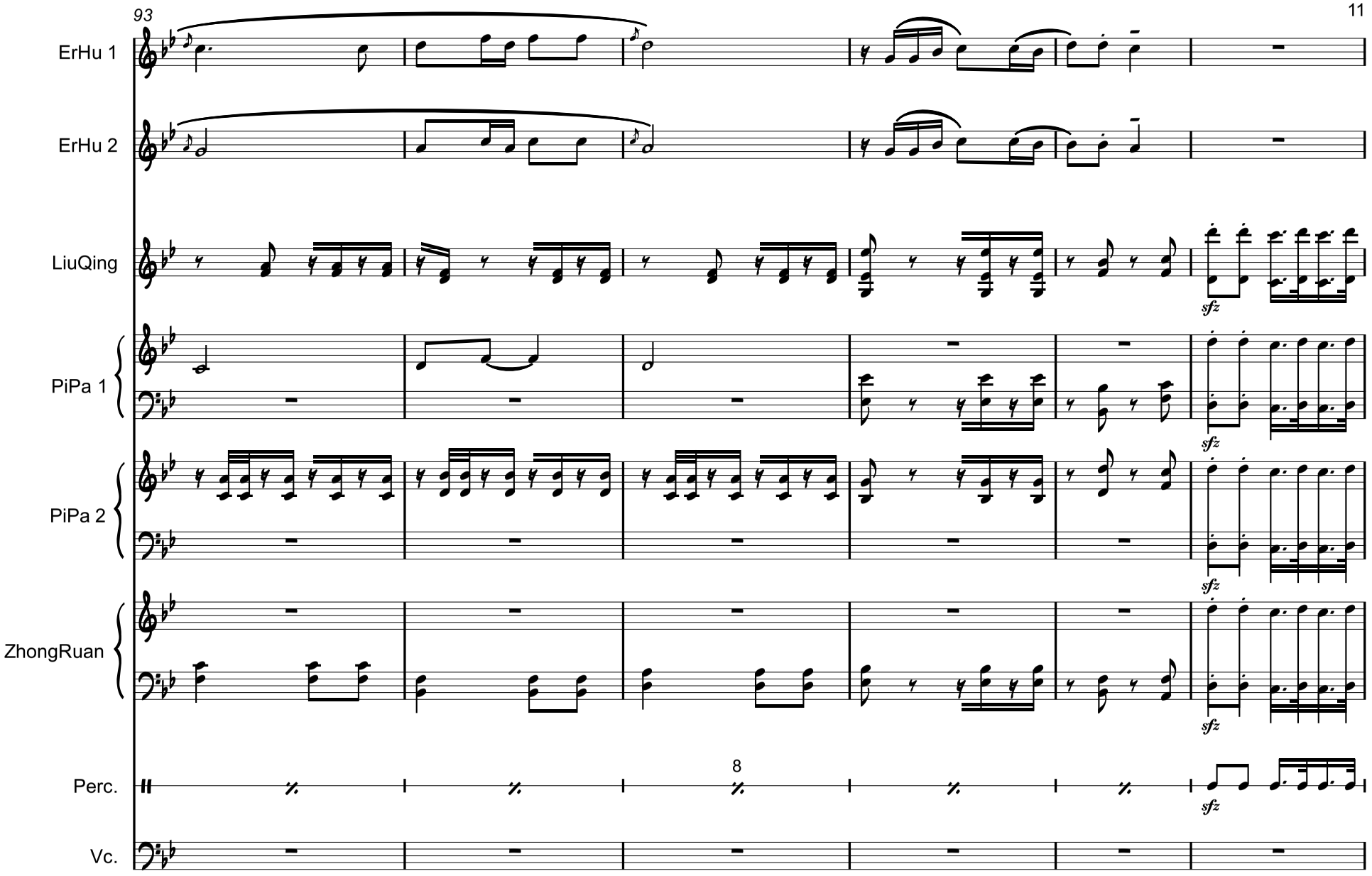
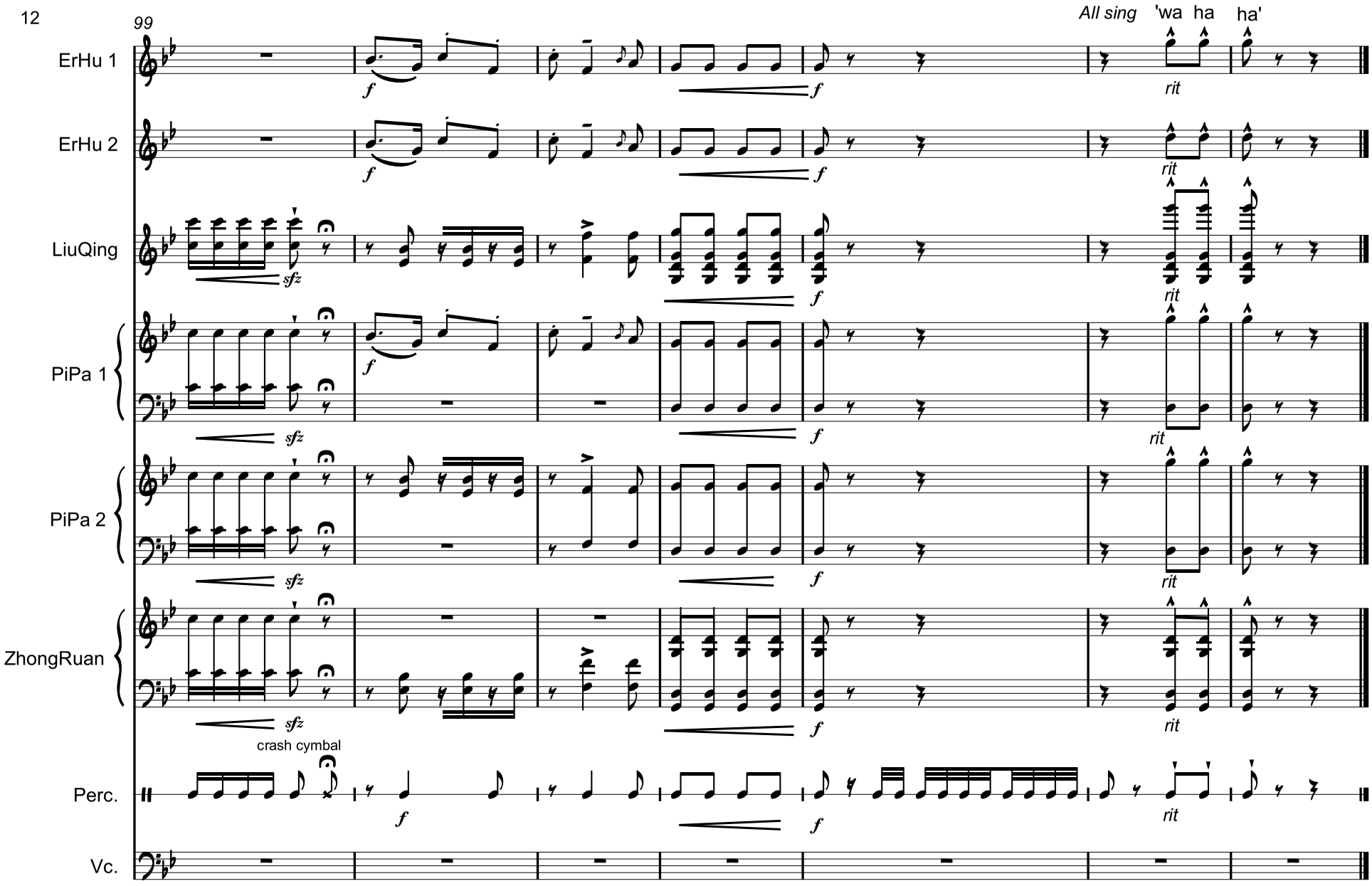
12
Vc.


66
ErHu 1
espress.
ErHu 2
LiuQing
espress.
PiPa 1
PiPa 2
solo
espress.
w/ erhu
ZhongRuan
Perc.
Vc.


G
♩ = 72
74
9
ErHu 1
ErHu 2
LiuQing
PiPa 1
PiPa 2
ZhongRuan
Perc.
Vc.
pizz
pizz
wind chime
4
8


H
84
ErHu 1
arco
mp
f
ErHu 2
arco
mp
f
LiuQing
f
PiPa 1
mf
PiPa 2
mf
ZhongRuan
Perc.
cymbal
mf
4
Vc.

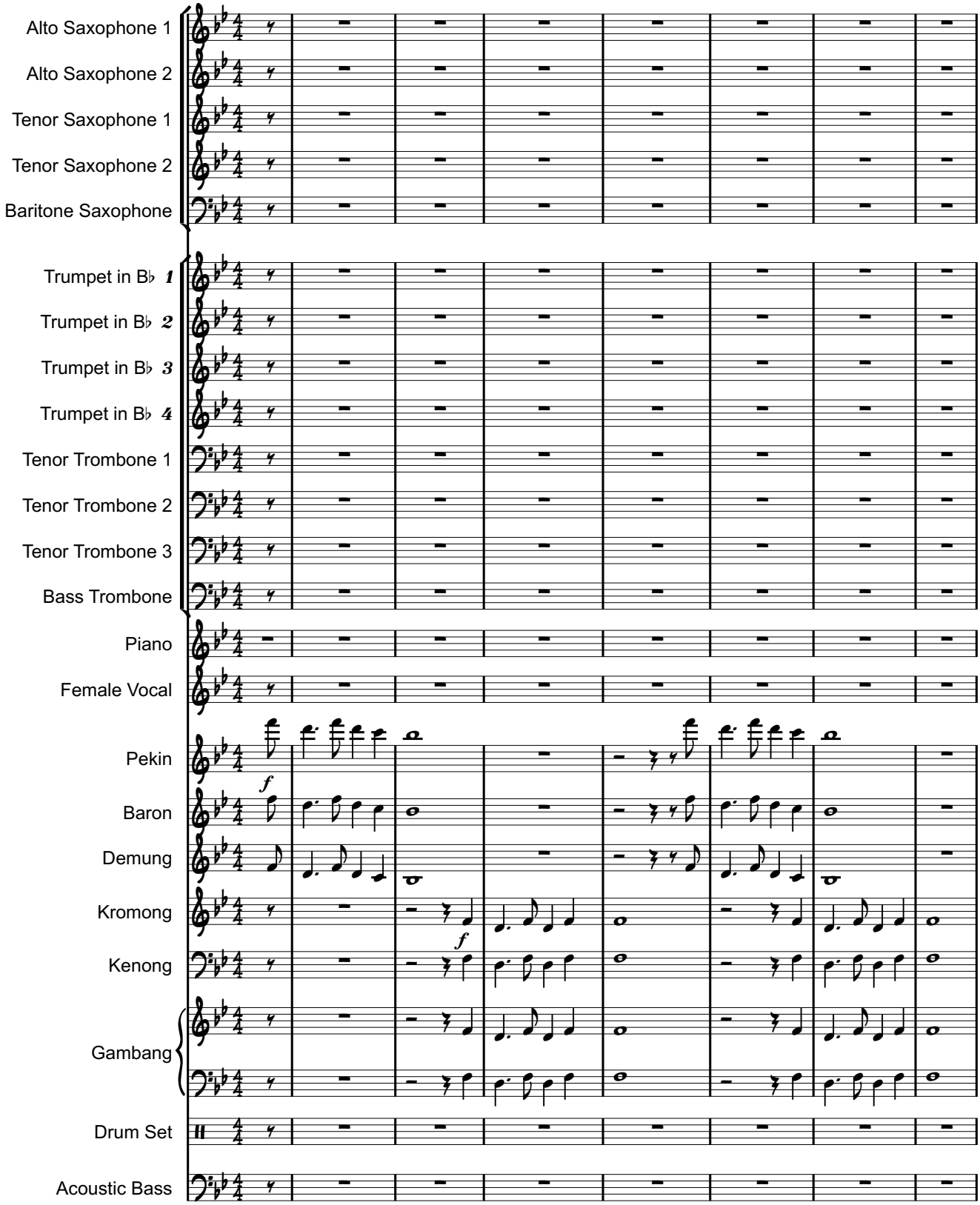

ErHu 1
ErHu 2
LiuQing
PiPa 1
PiPa 2
ZhongRuan
Perc.
Vc.
8
sfz

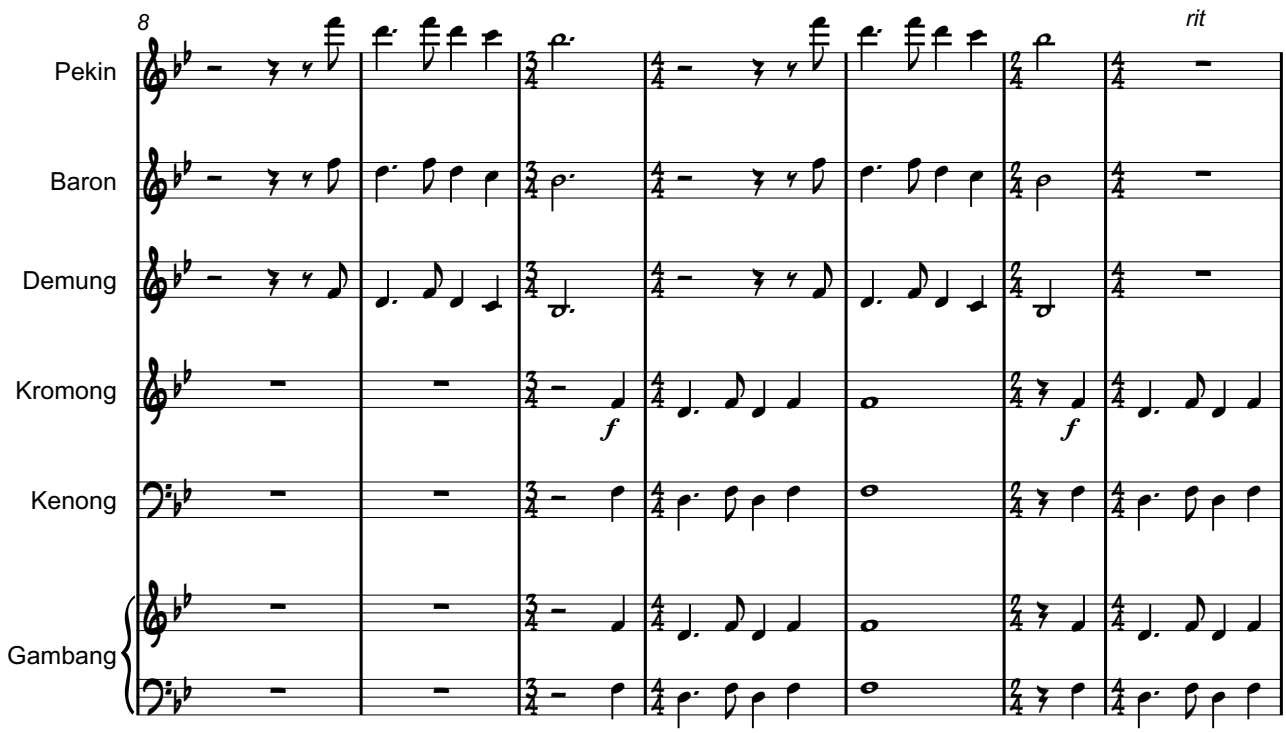

99
All sing
'wa ha ha'
ErHu 1
ErHu 2
LiuQing
PiPa 1
PiPa 2
ZhongRuan
Perc.
Vc.
crash cymbal
f
sfz
rit

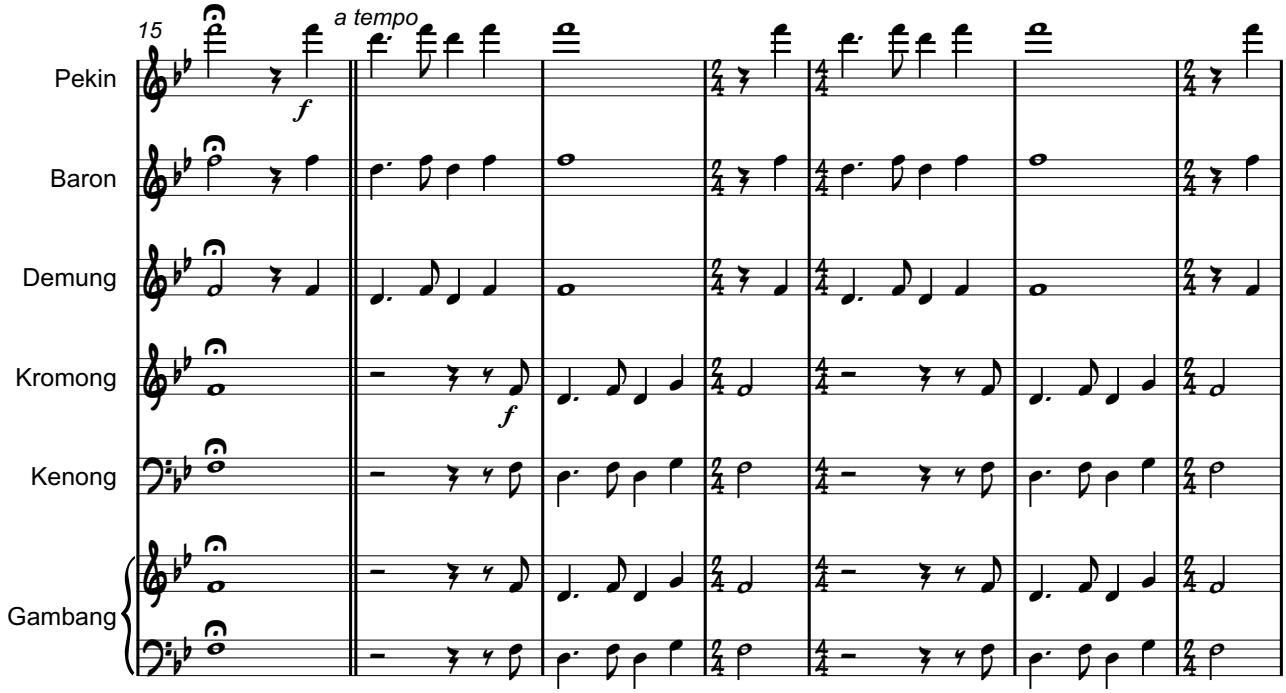
Lenggang Kangkong

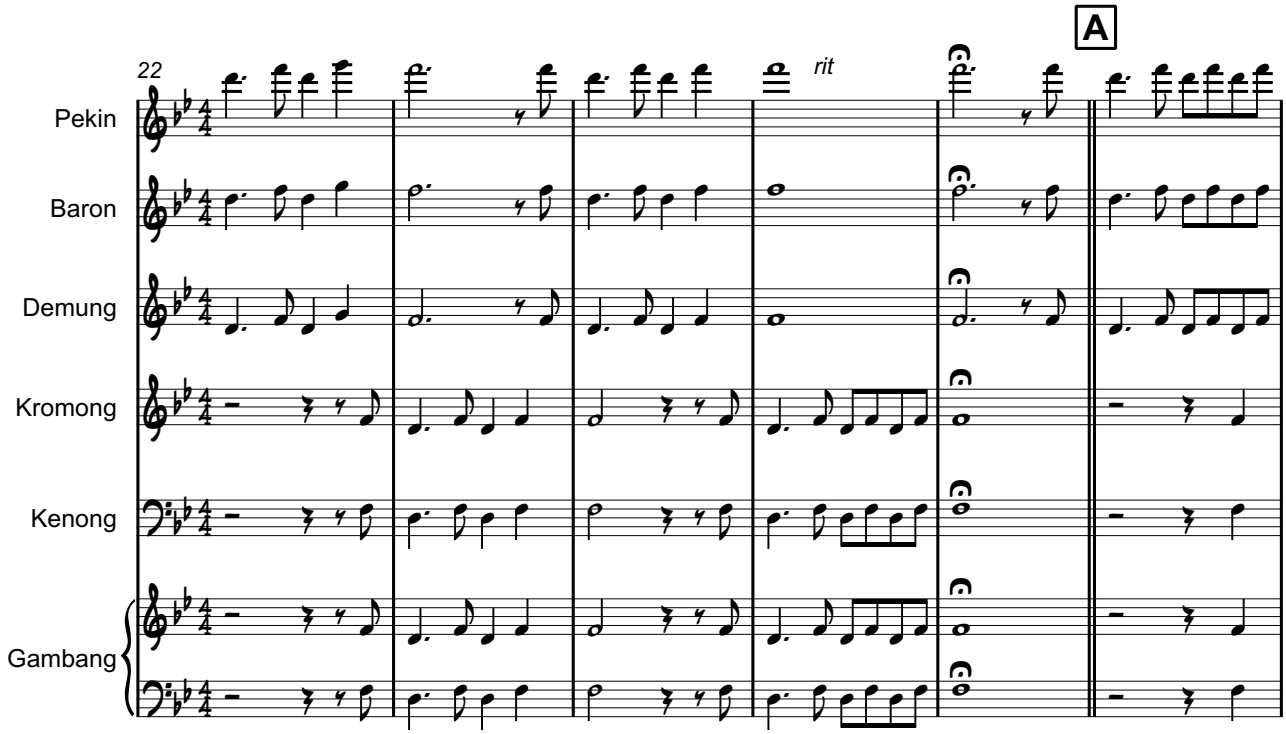
Traditional
Arranged by Isabella Pek
February 2012, MDX

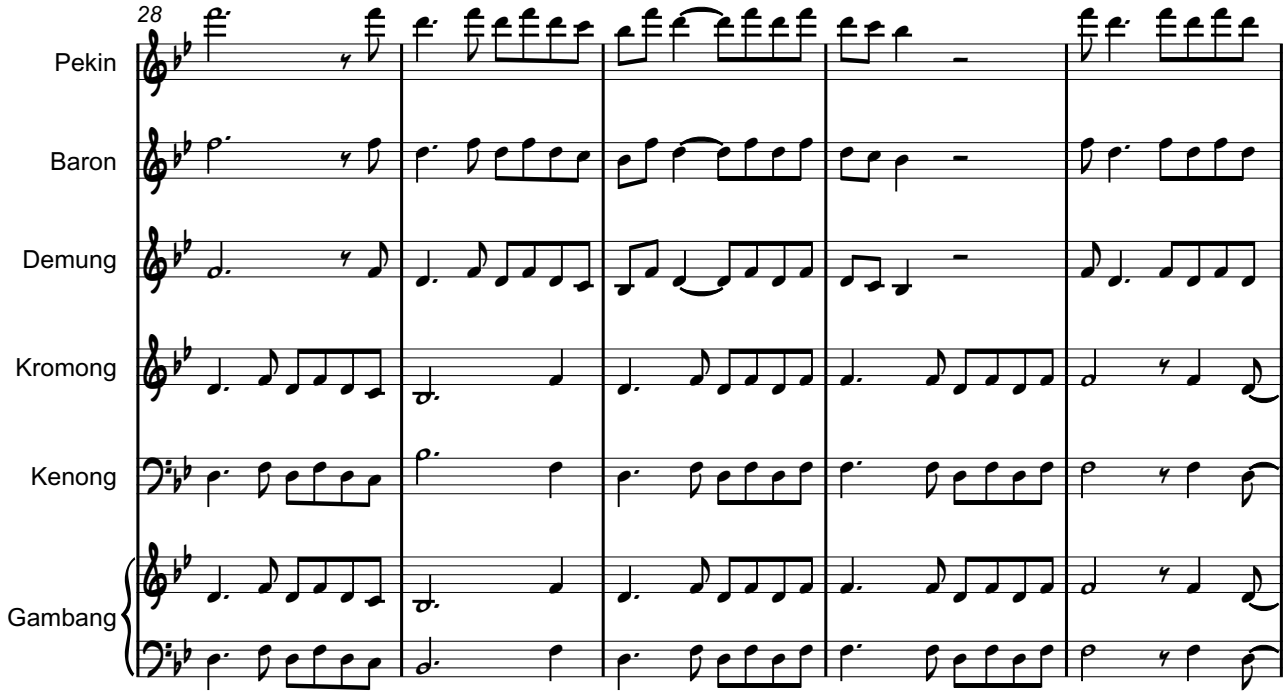
♩ = 200

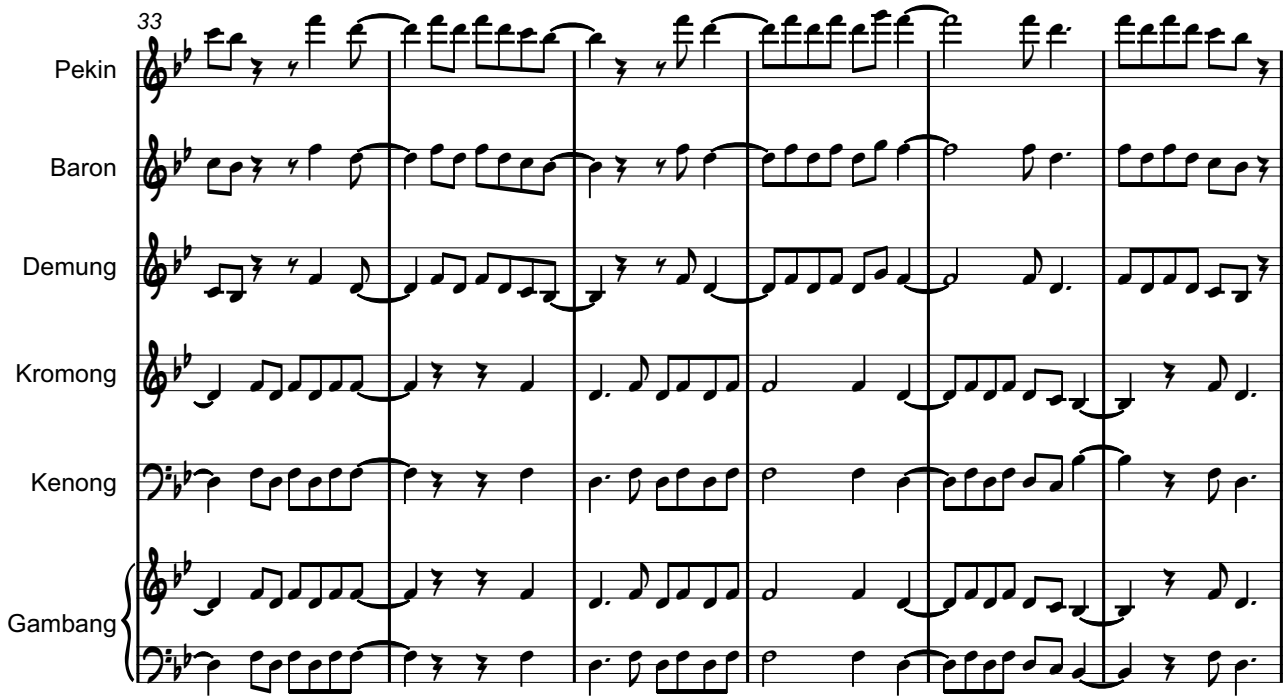


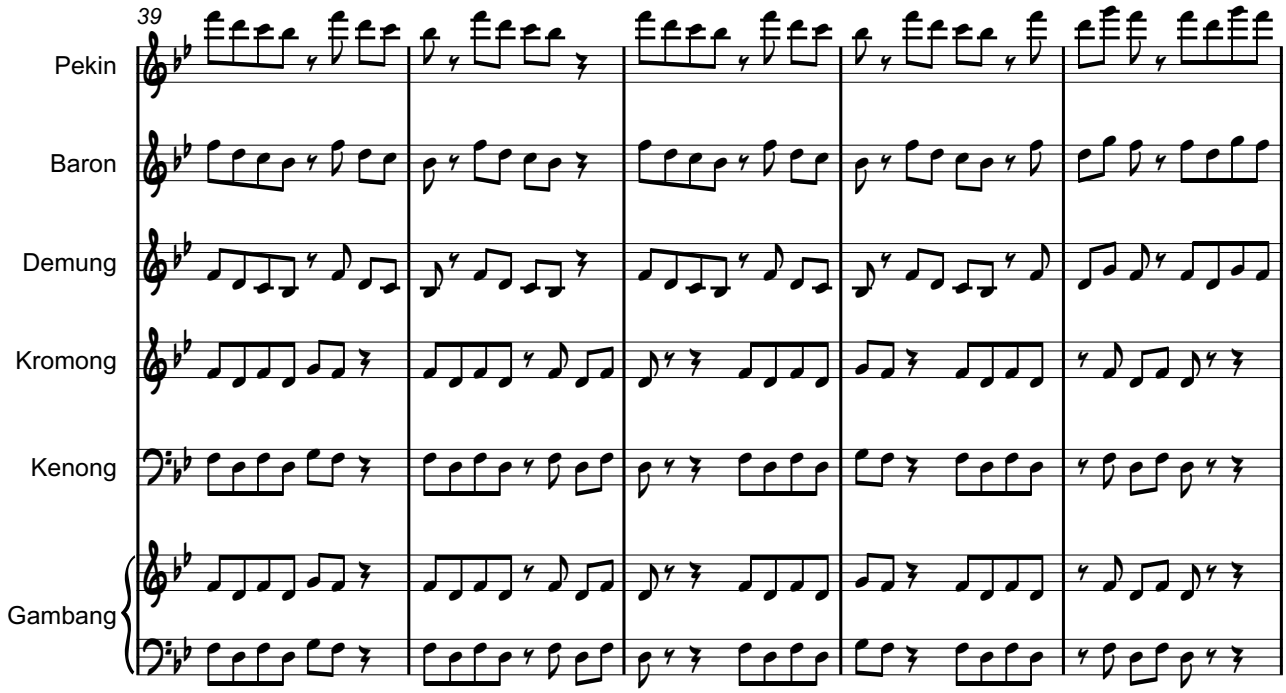

8
rit
Pekin
Baron
Demung
Kromong
Kenong
Gambang
f
f

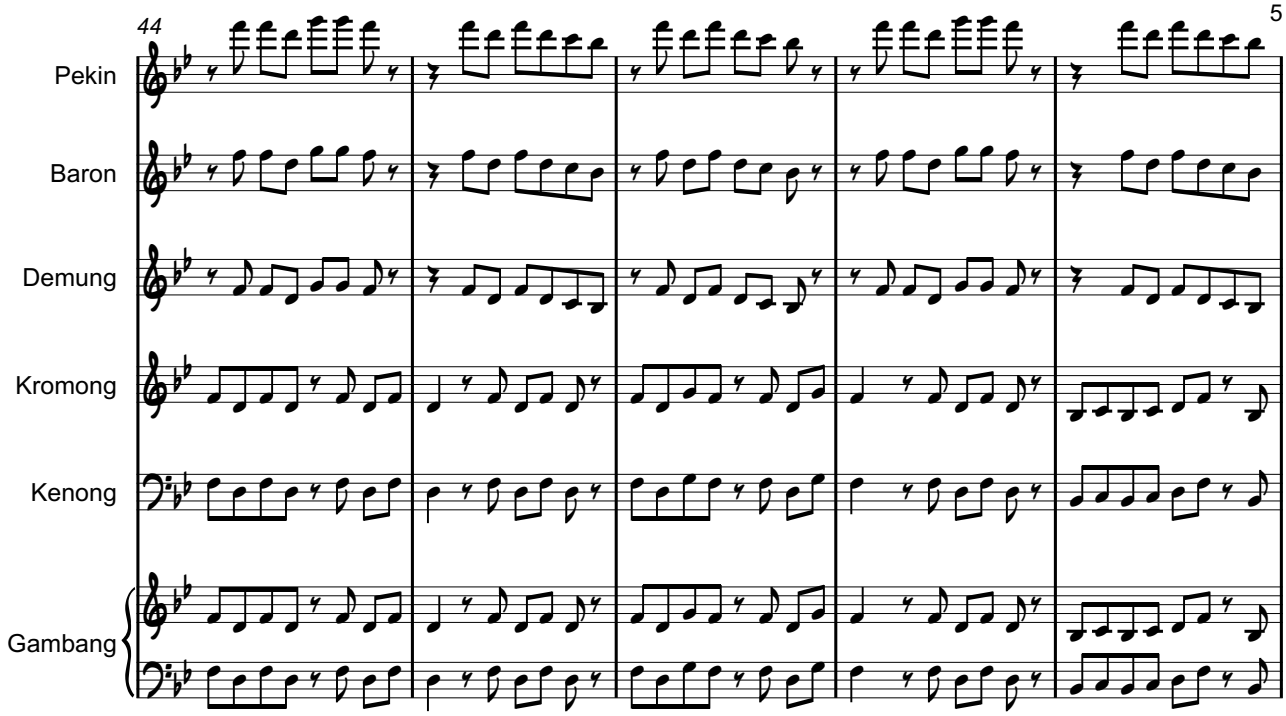

15
a tempo
Pekin
Baron
Demung
Kromong
Kenong
Gambang
f
f

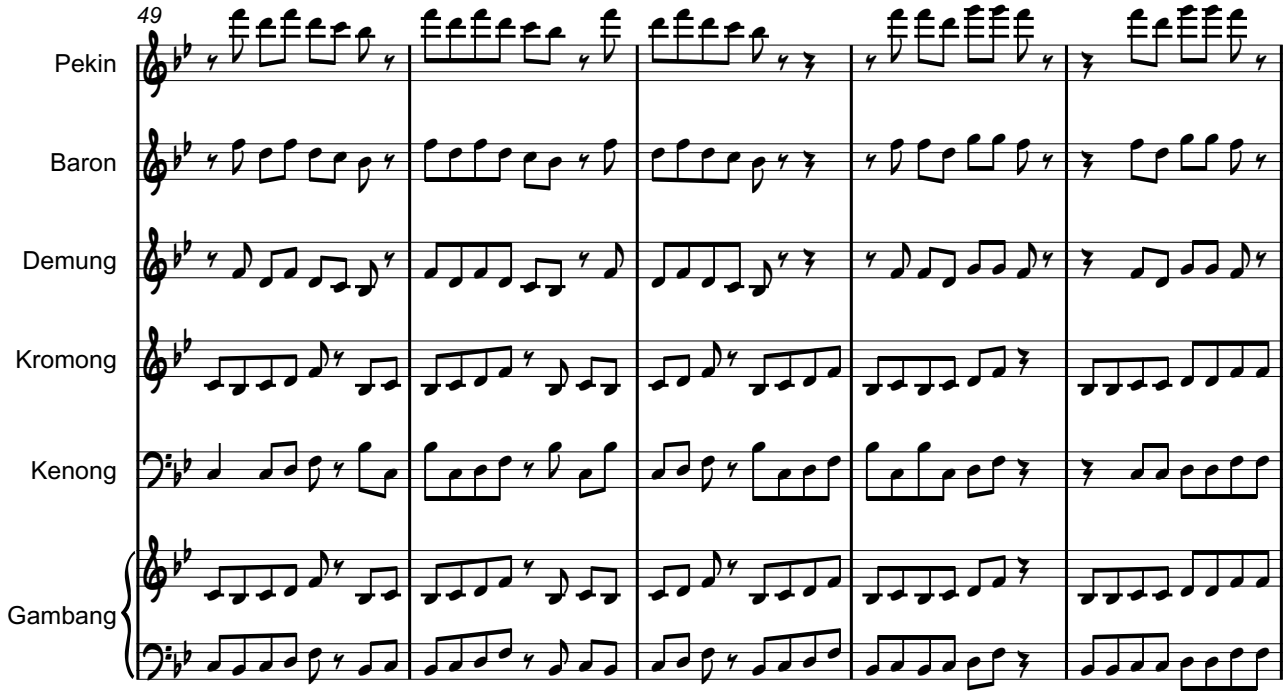

22
rit
A
Pekin
Baron
Demung
Kromong
Kenong
Gambang

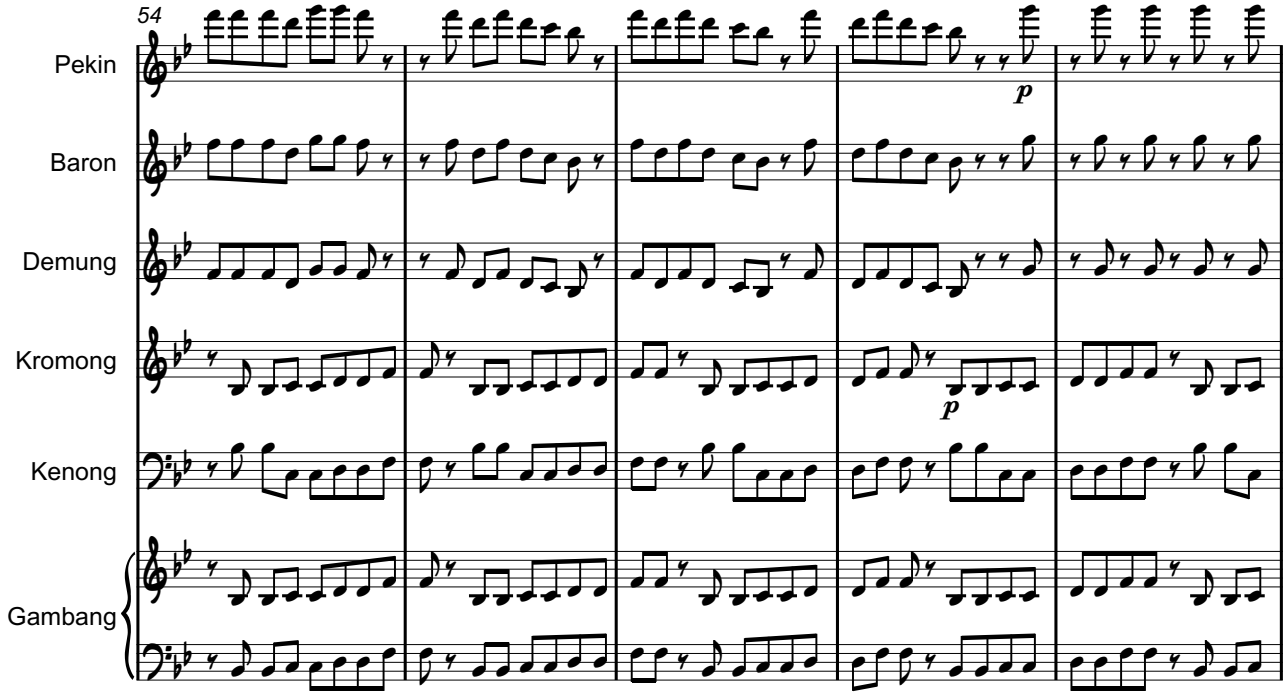

28
Pekin
Baron
Demung
Kromong
Kenong
Gambang

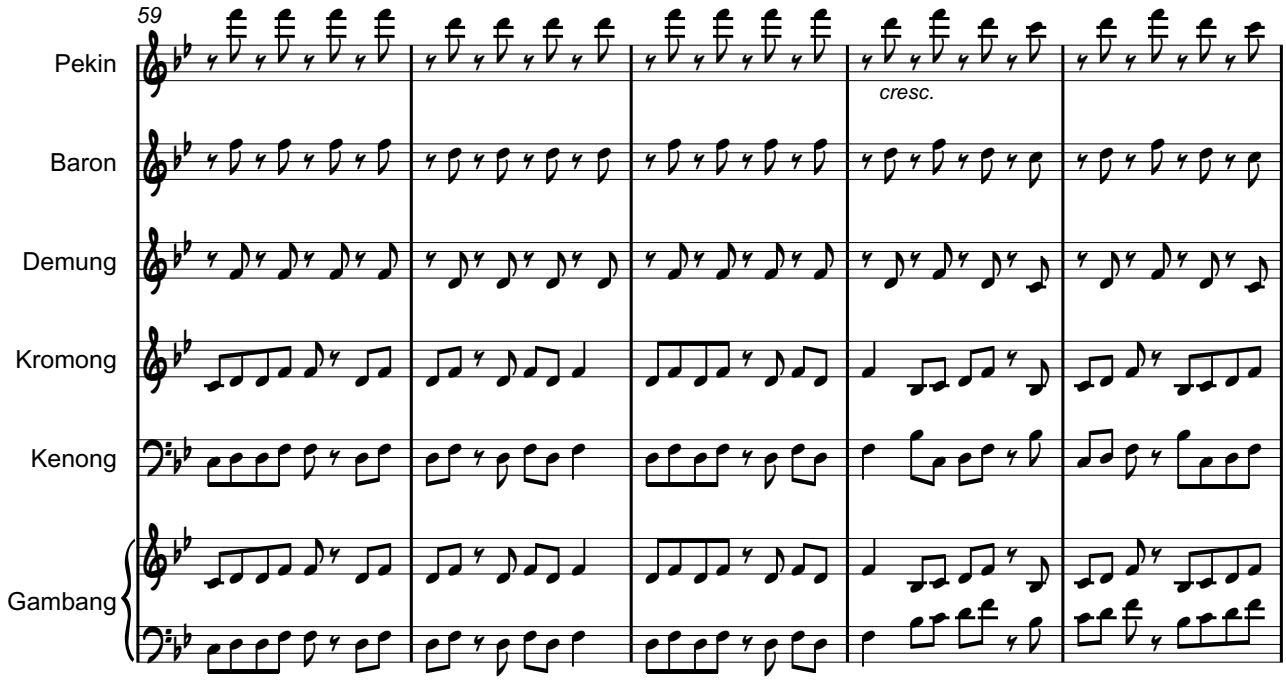

33
Pekin
Baron
Demung
Kromong
Kenong
Gambang

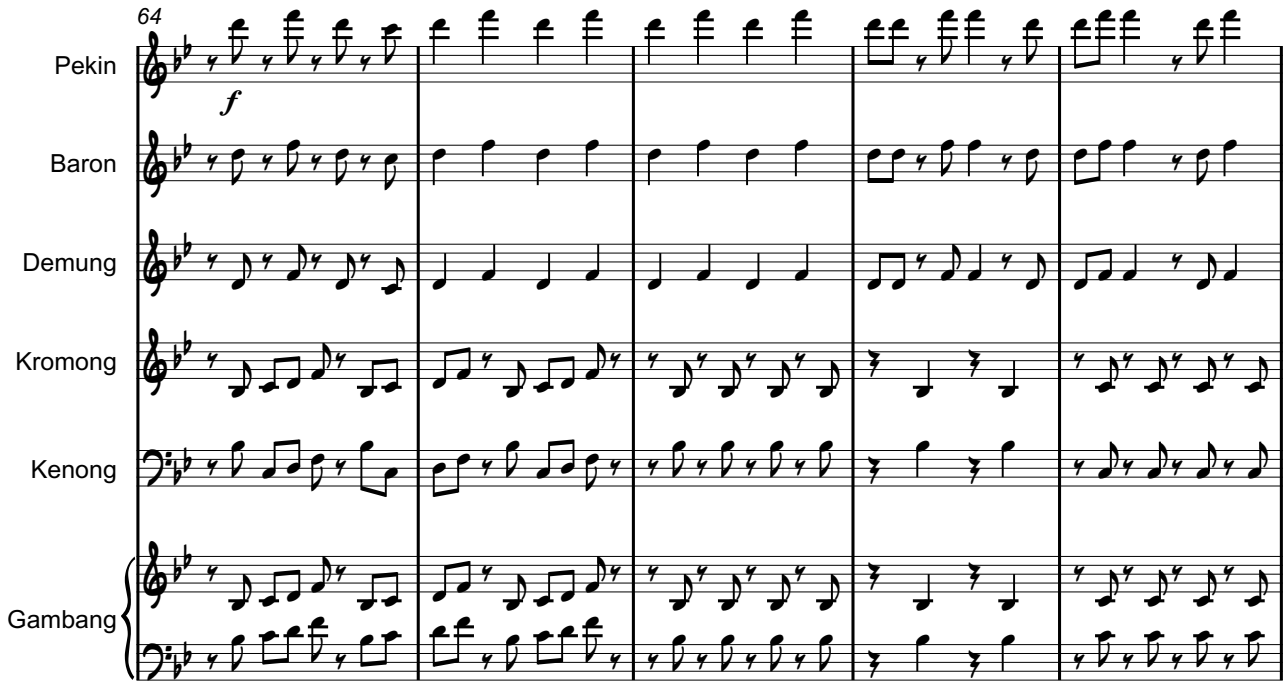

39
Pekin
Baron
Demung
Kromong
Kenong
Gambang

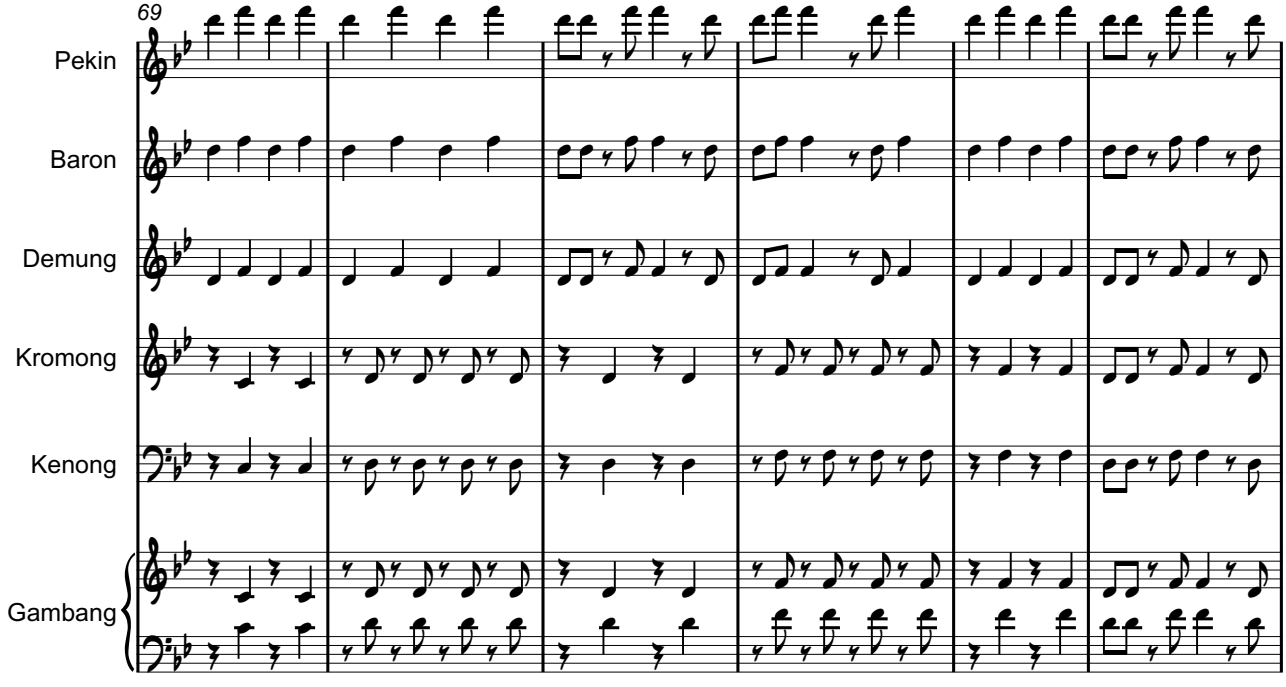

44
Pekin
Baron
Demung
Kromong
Kenong
Gambang

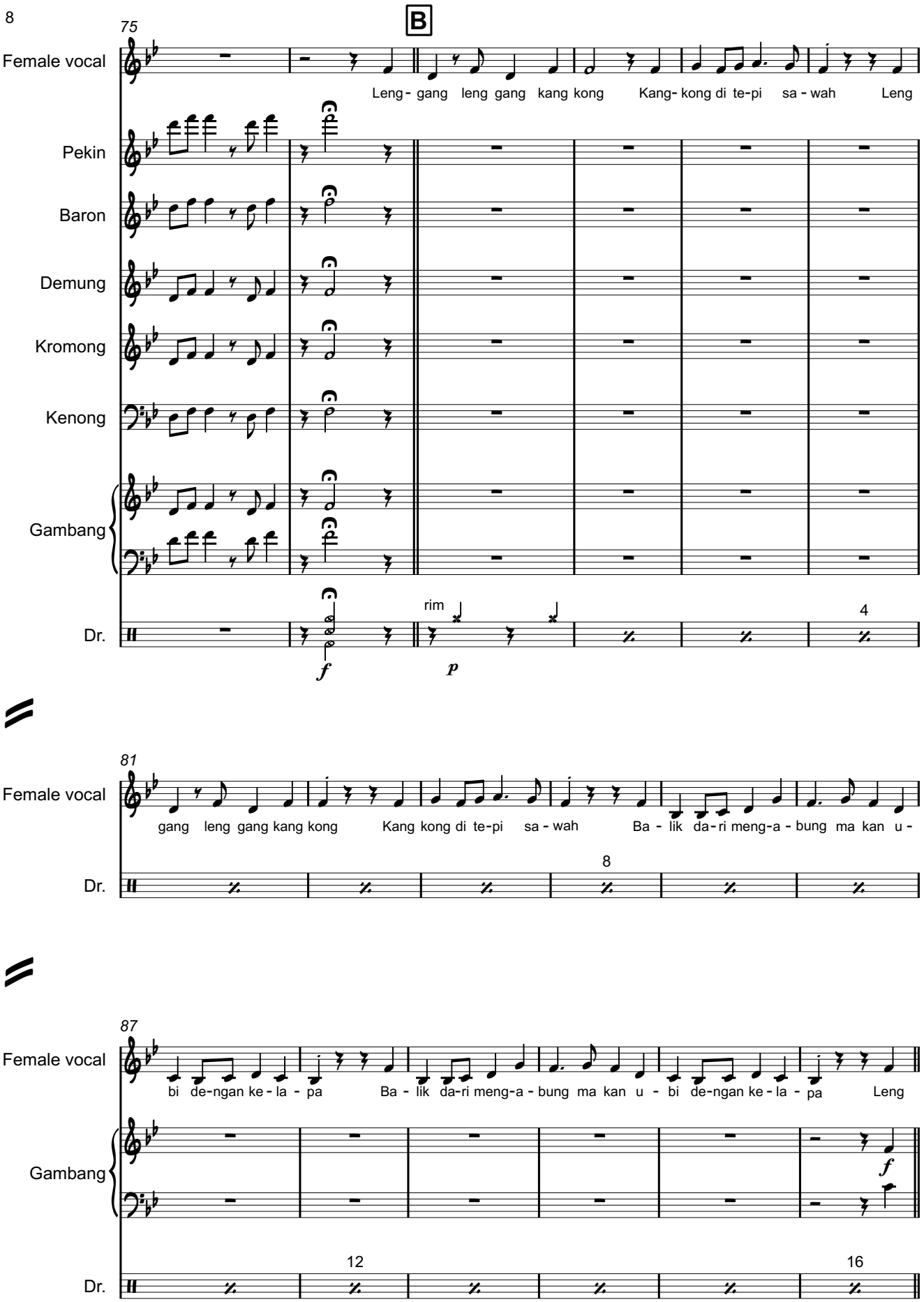

49
Pekin
Baron
Demung
Kromong
Kenong
Gambang

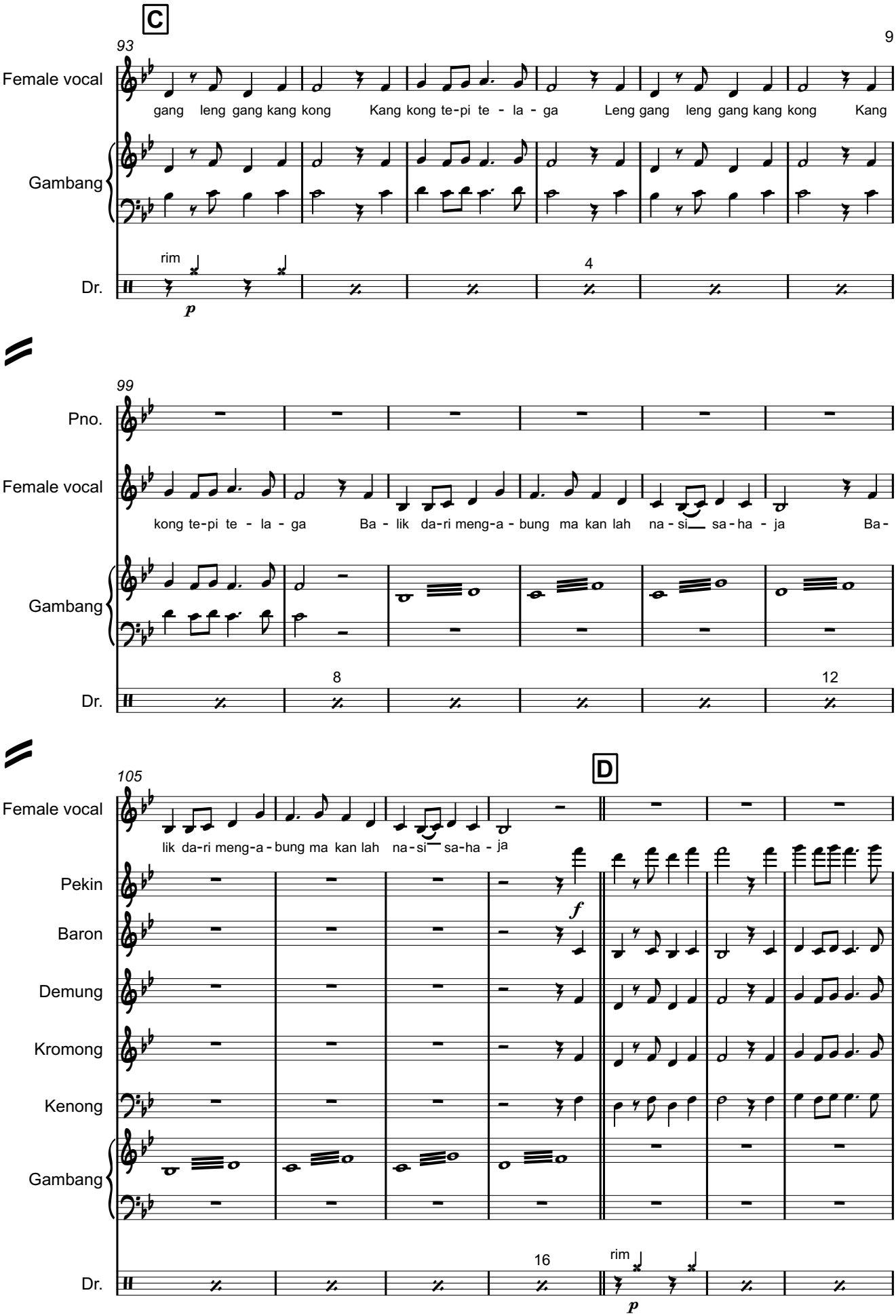

54
Pekin
Baron
Demung
Kromong
Kenong
Gambang
p
p

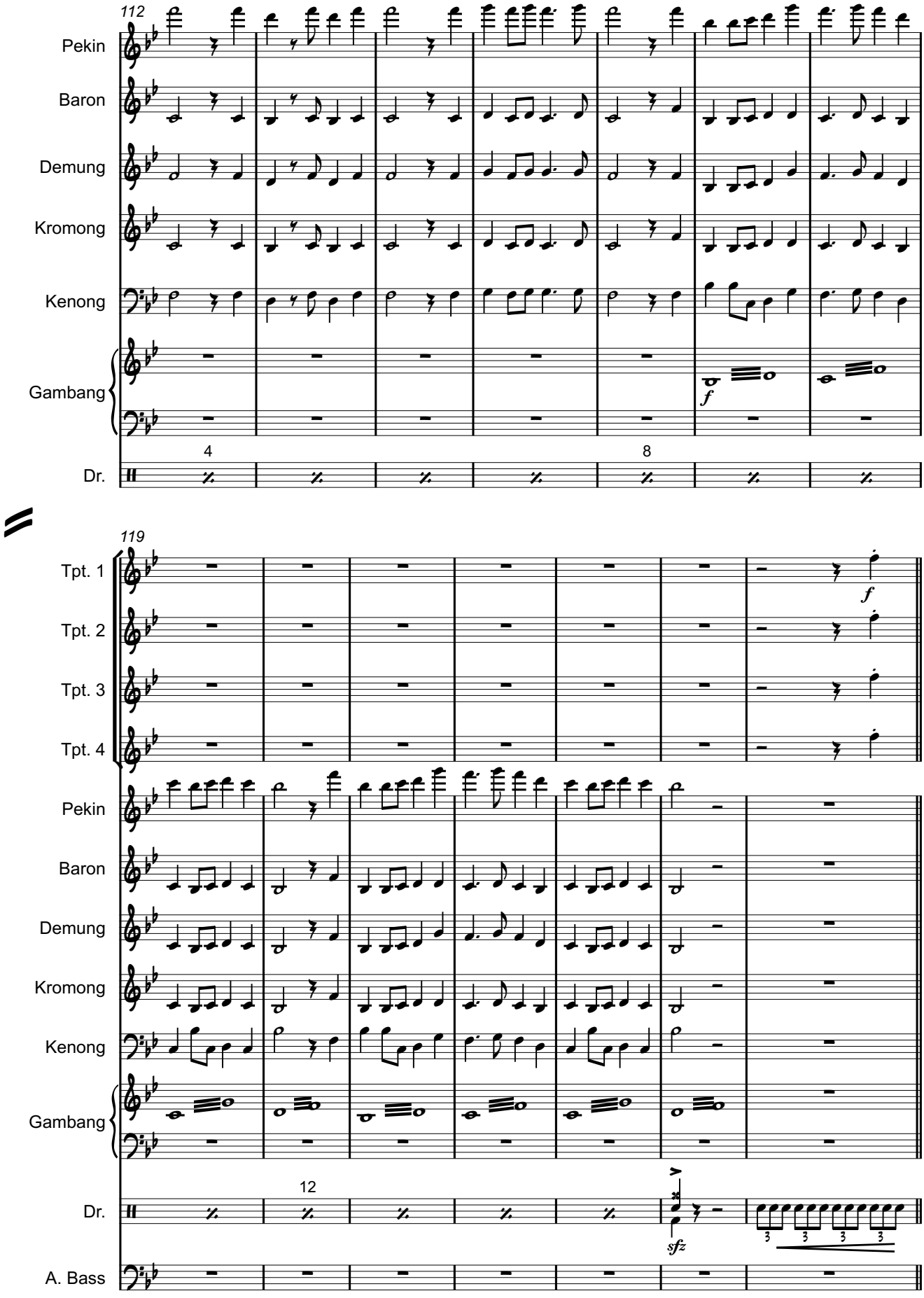

59
Pekin
Baron
Demung
Kromong
Kenong
Gambang
cresc.

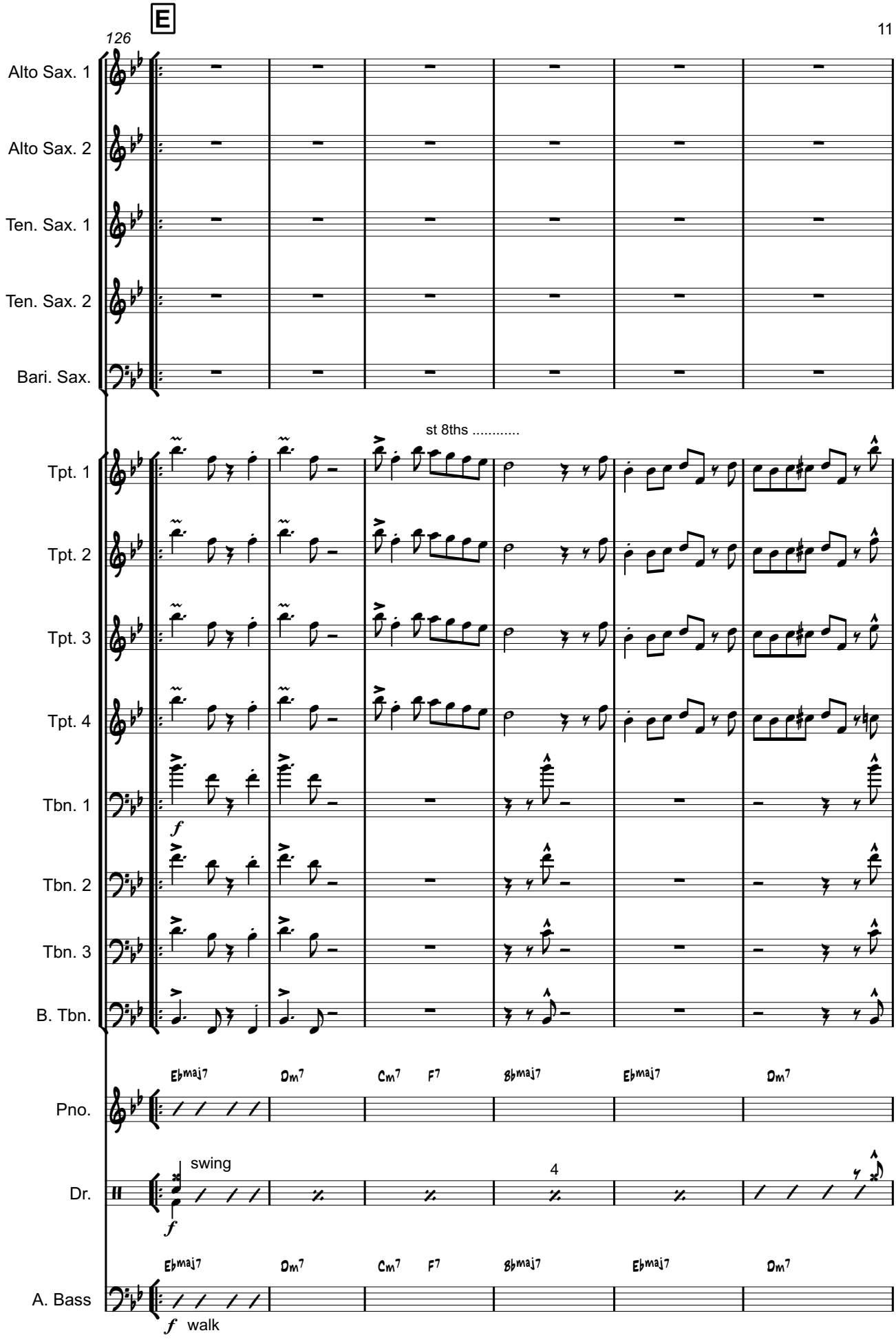

64
Pekin
Baron
Demung
Kromong
Kenong
Gambang
f

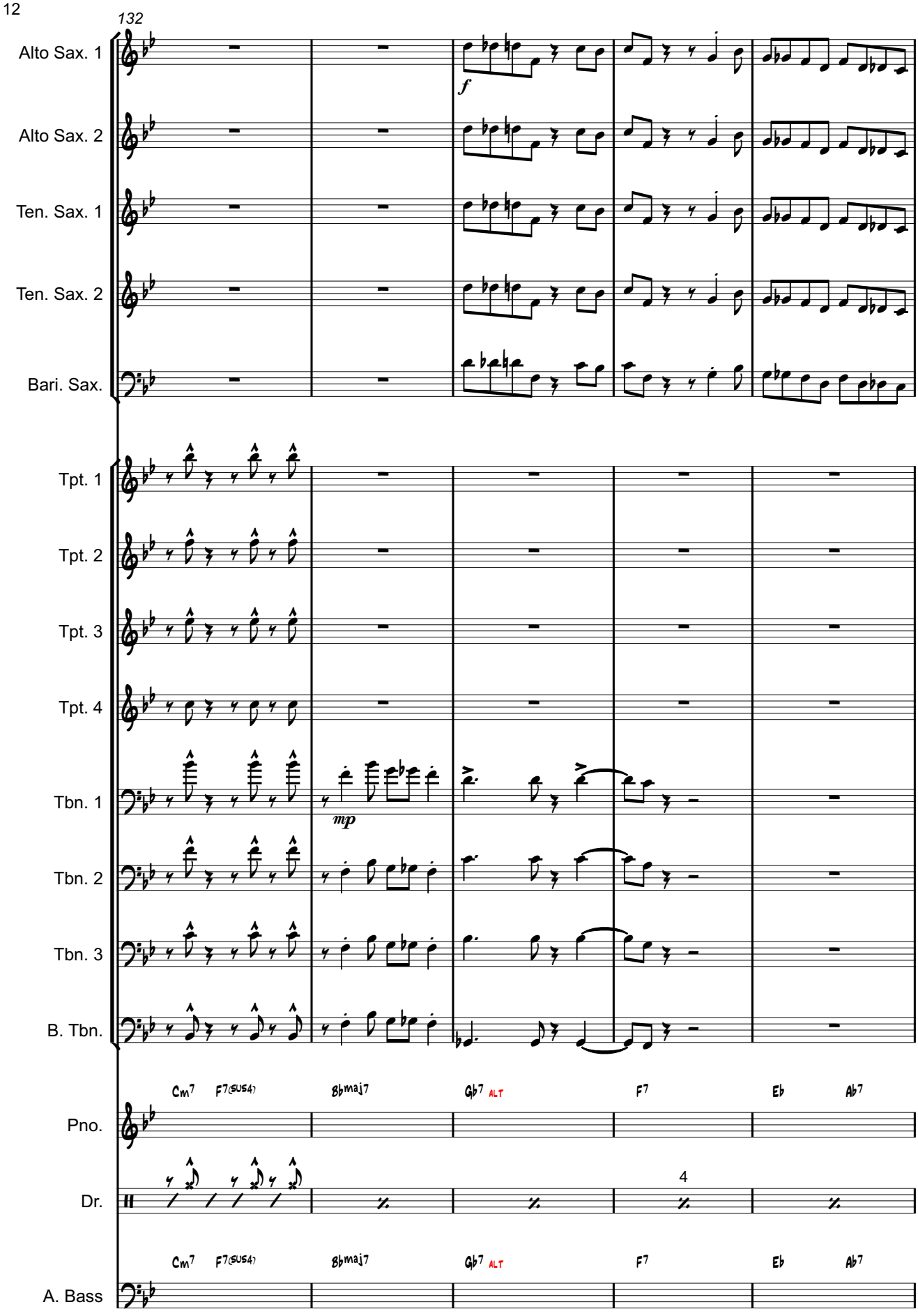

69
Pekin
Baron
Demung
Kromong
Kenong
Gambang

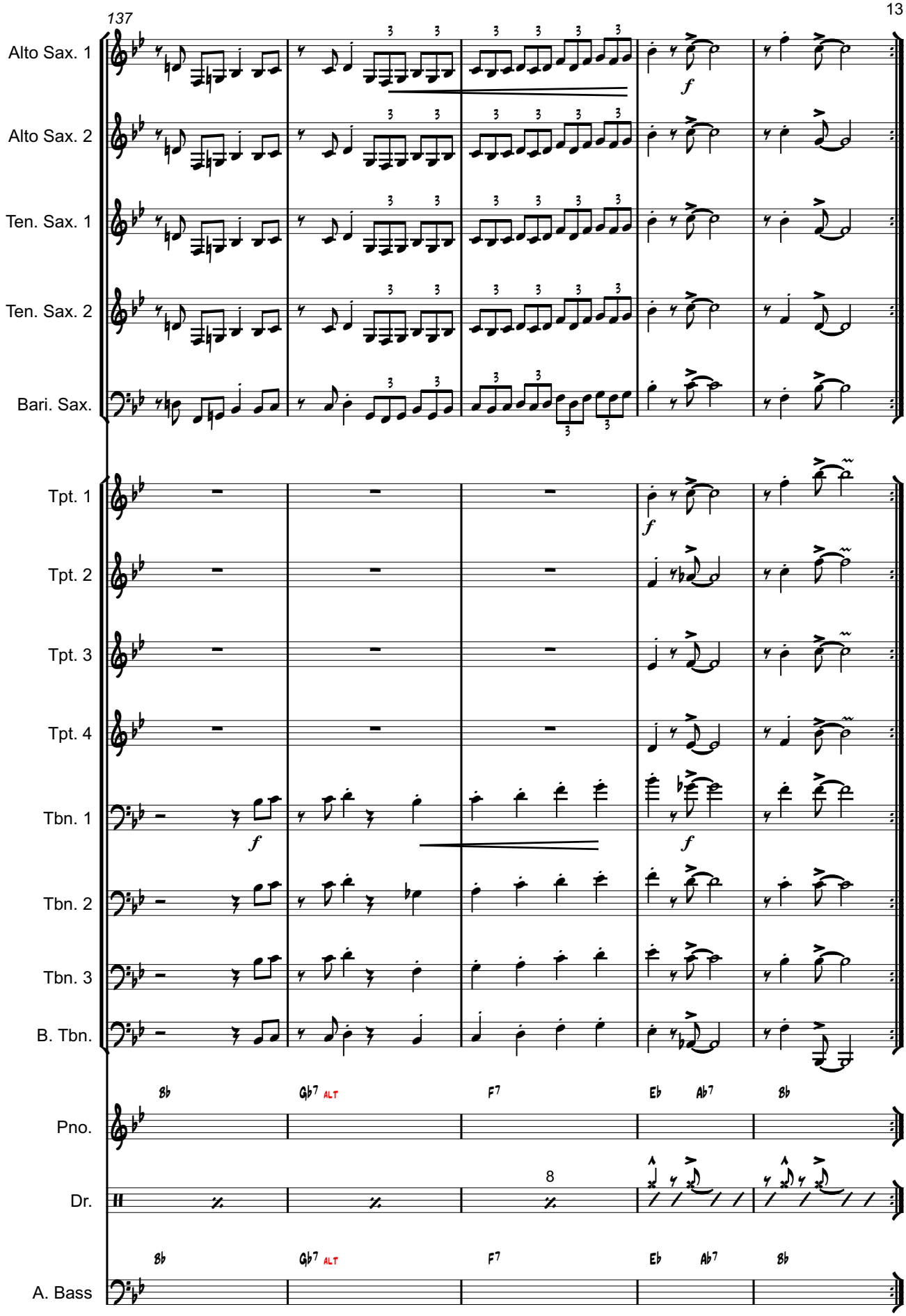

75
B
Female vocal
Leng - gang leng gang kang kong Kang - kong di te-pi sa - wah Leng
Pekin
Baron
Demung
Kromong
Kenong
Gambang
Dr.
rim
4
f
p
81
Female vocal
gang leng gang kang kong Kang kong di te-pi sa - wah Ba - lik da - ri meng-a - bung ma kan u -
Dr.
8
87
Female vocal
bi de-ngan ke - la - pa Ba - lik da-ri meng-a - bung ma kan u - bi de-ngan ke - la - pa Leng
Gambang
f
Dr.
12
16

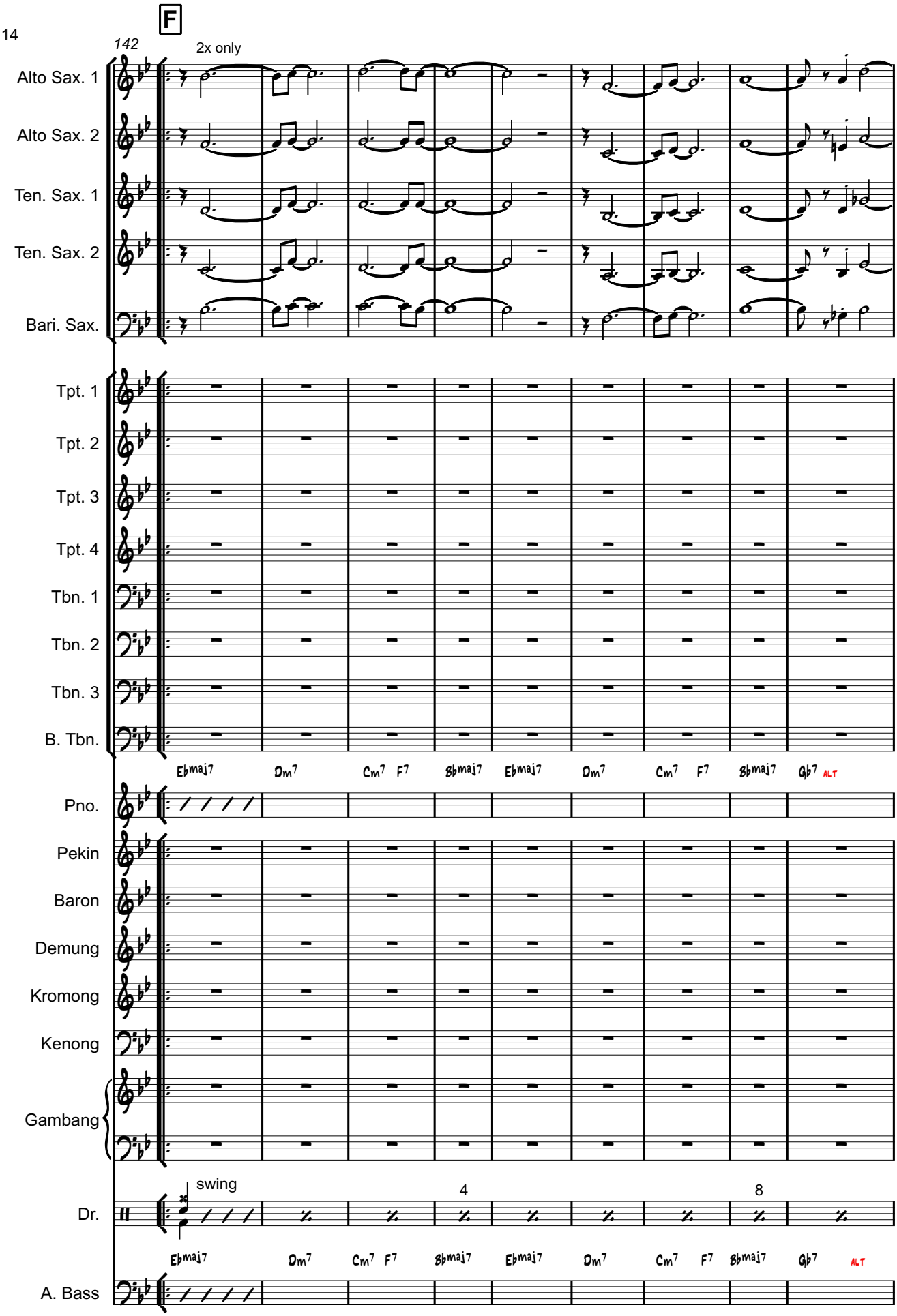

C
93
9
Female vocal
gang leng gang kang kong Kang kong te-pi te - la - ga Leng gang leng gang kang kong Kang
Gambang
rim
Dr.
p
4
99
Pno.
Female vocal
kong te-pi te - la - ga Ba - lik da-ri meng-a - bung ma kan lah na - si sa - ha - ja Ba-
Gambang
8
12
Dr.
105
D
Female vocal
lik da-ri meng-a - bung ma kan lah na - si sa-ha - ja
Pekin
Baron
Demung
Kromong
Kenong
Gambang
f
16
rim
Dr.
p

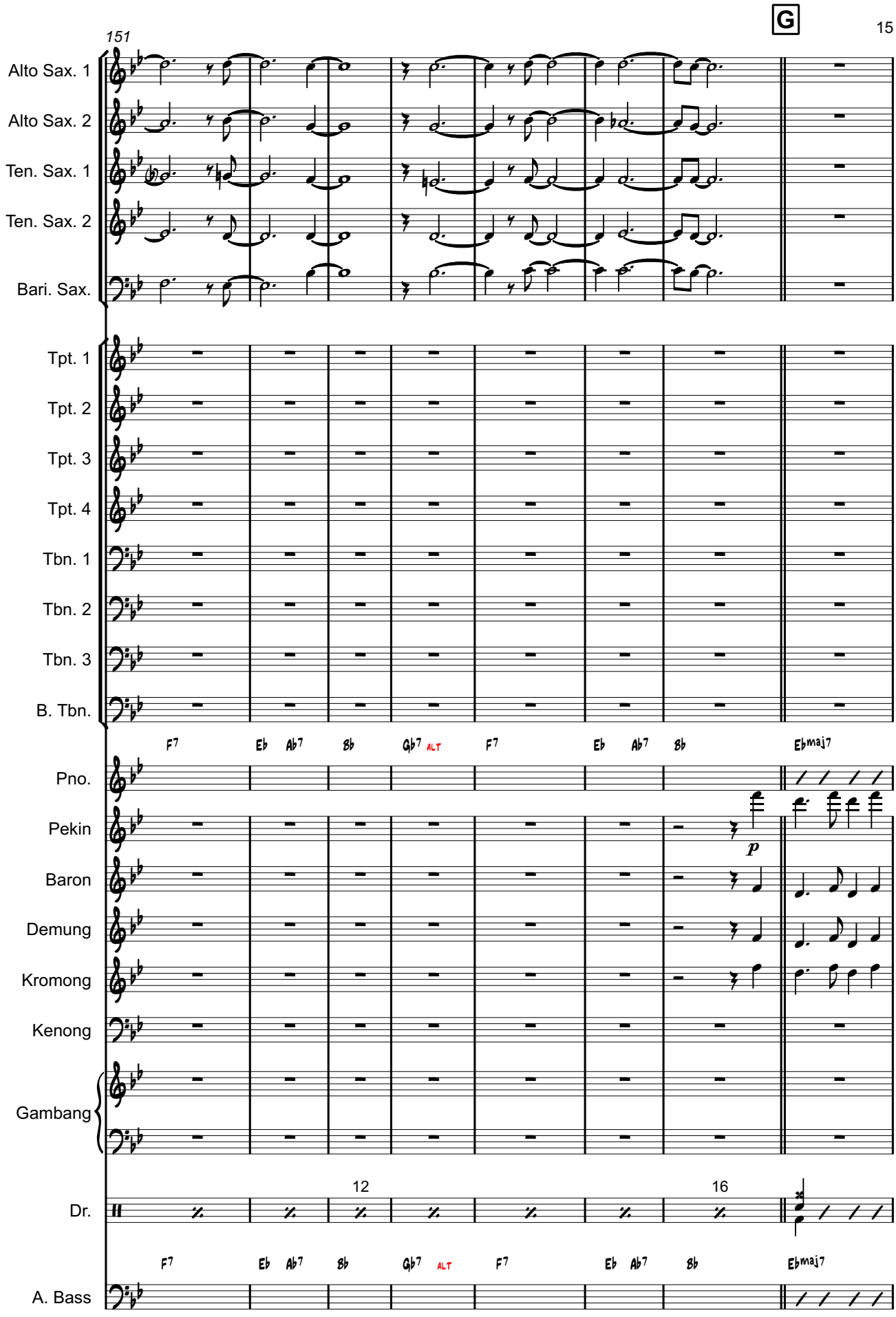

112
Pekin
Baron
Demung
Kromong
Kenong
Gambang
f
4
8
Dr.
119
Tpt. 1
Tpt. 2
Tpt. 3
Tpt. 4
f
Pekin
Baron
Demung
Kromong
Kenong
Gambang
12
Dr.
sfz
3
A. Bass

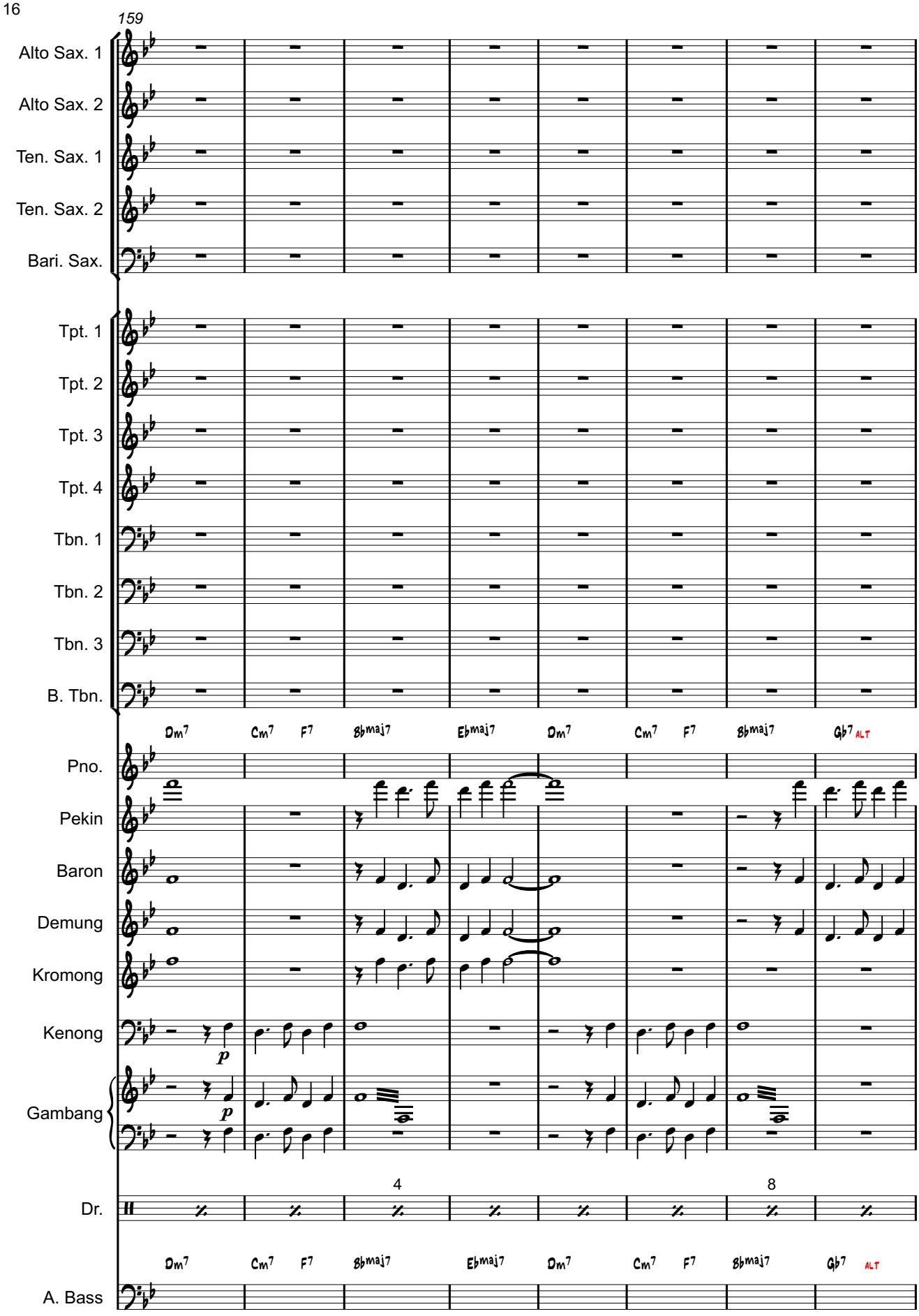

E
126
Alto Sax. 1
Alto Sax. 2
Ten. Sax. 1
Ten. Sax. 2
Bari. Sax.
st 8ths .....
Tpt. 1
Tpt. 2
Tpt. 3
Tpt. 4
Tbn. 1
Tbn. 2
Tbn. 3
B. Tbn.
f
Pno.
Ebmaj7
Dm7
Cm7
F7
Bbmaj7
Ebmaj7
Dm7
Dr.
swing
4
f
A. Bass
Ebmaj7
Dm7
Cm7
F7
Bbmaj7
Ebmaj7
Dm7
f walk

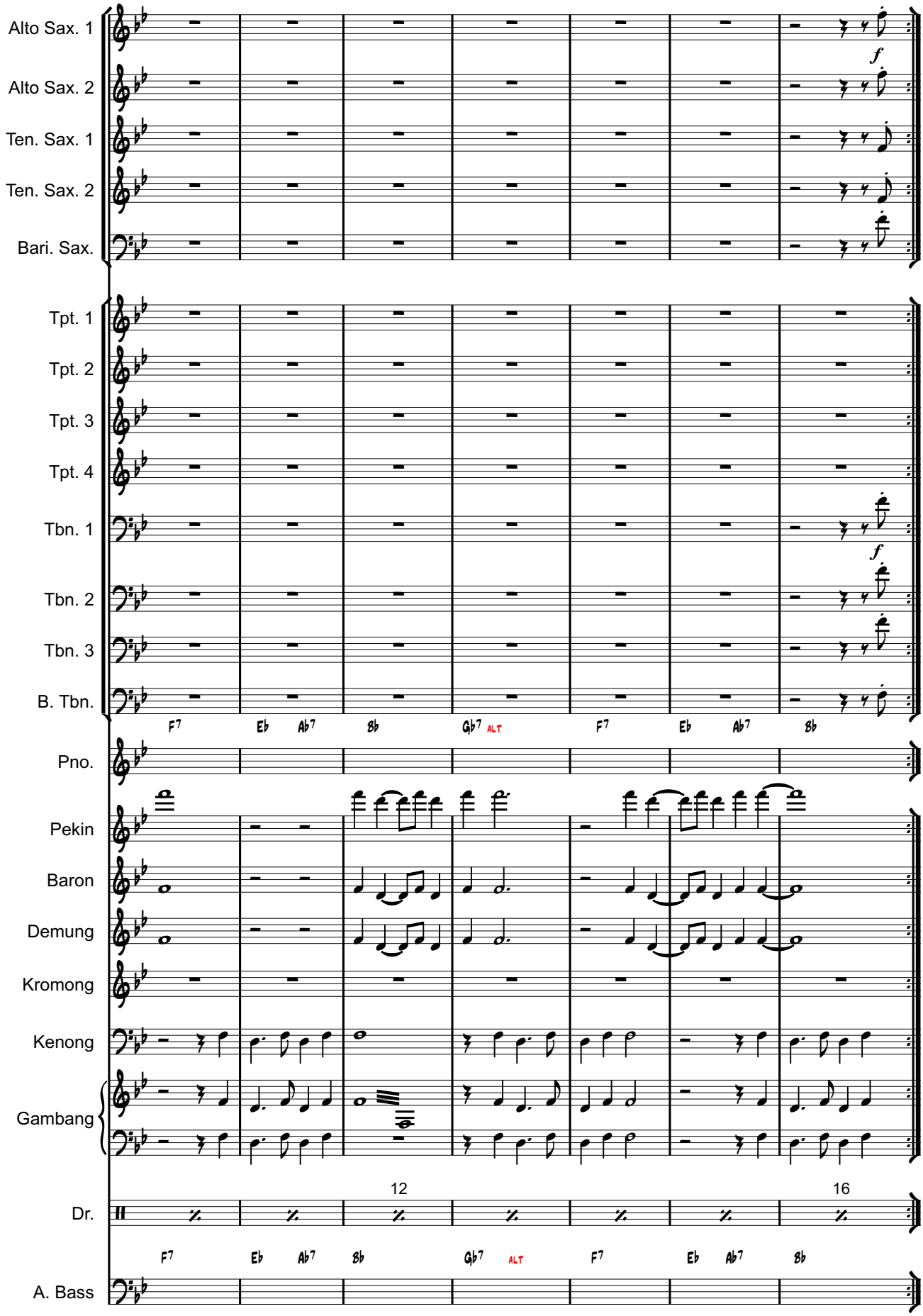

132
Alto Sax. 1
Alto Sax. 2
Ten. Sax. 1
Ten. Sax. 2
Bari. Sax.
f
Tpt. 1
Tpt. 2
Tpt. 3
Tpt. 4
Tbn. 1
Tbn. 2
Tbn. 3
B. Tbn.
mp
Cm7
F7(sus4)
Bbmaj7
Gb7 ALT
F7
Eb
Ab7
Pno.
Dr.
4
A. Bass

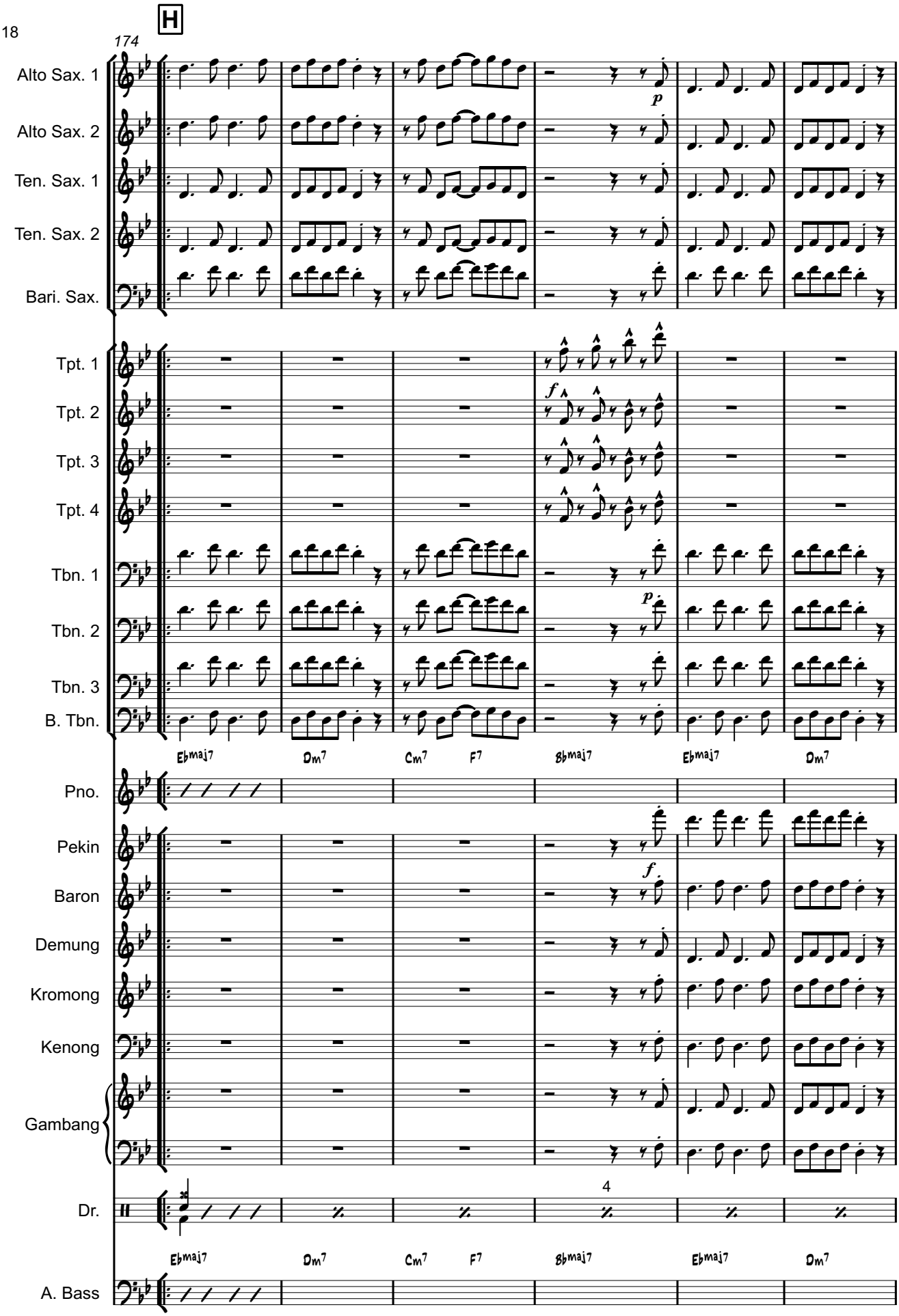

137
Alto Sax. 1
Alto Sax. 2
Ten. Sax. 1
Ten. Sax. 2
Bari. Sax.
Tpt. 1
Tpt. 2
Tpt. 3
Tpt. 4
Tbn. 1
Tbn. 2
Tbn. 3
B. Tbn.
Pno.
Dr.
A. Bass
f
8
Bb
Gb7 ALT
F7
Eb
Ab7
Bb

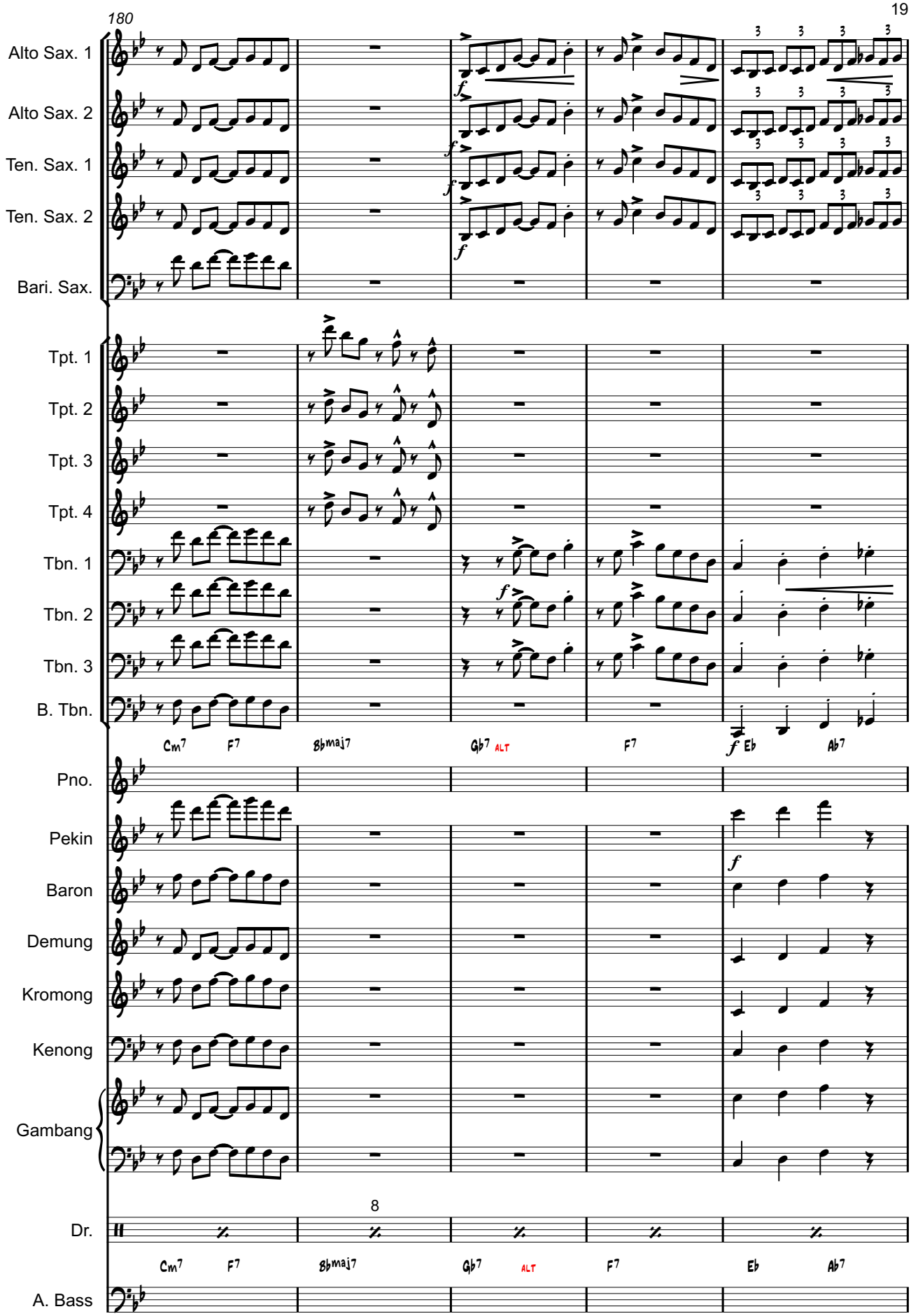

F
142
2x only
Alto Sax. 1
Alto Sax. 2
Ten. Sax. 1
Ten. Sax. 2
Bari. Sax.
Tpt. 1
Tpt. 2
Tpt. 3
Tpt. 4
Tbn. 1
Tbn. 2
Tbn. 3
B. Tbn.
Ebmaj7 Dm7 Cm7 F7 Bbmaj7 Ebmaj7 Dm7 Cm7 F7 Bbmaj7 Gb7 ALT
Pno.
Pekin
Baron
Demung
Kromong
Kenong
Gambang
swing
4
8
Dr.
Ebmaj7 Dm7 Cm7 F7 Bbmaj7 Ebmaj7 Dm7 Cm7 F7 Bbmaj7 Gb7 ALT
A. Bass

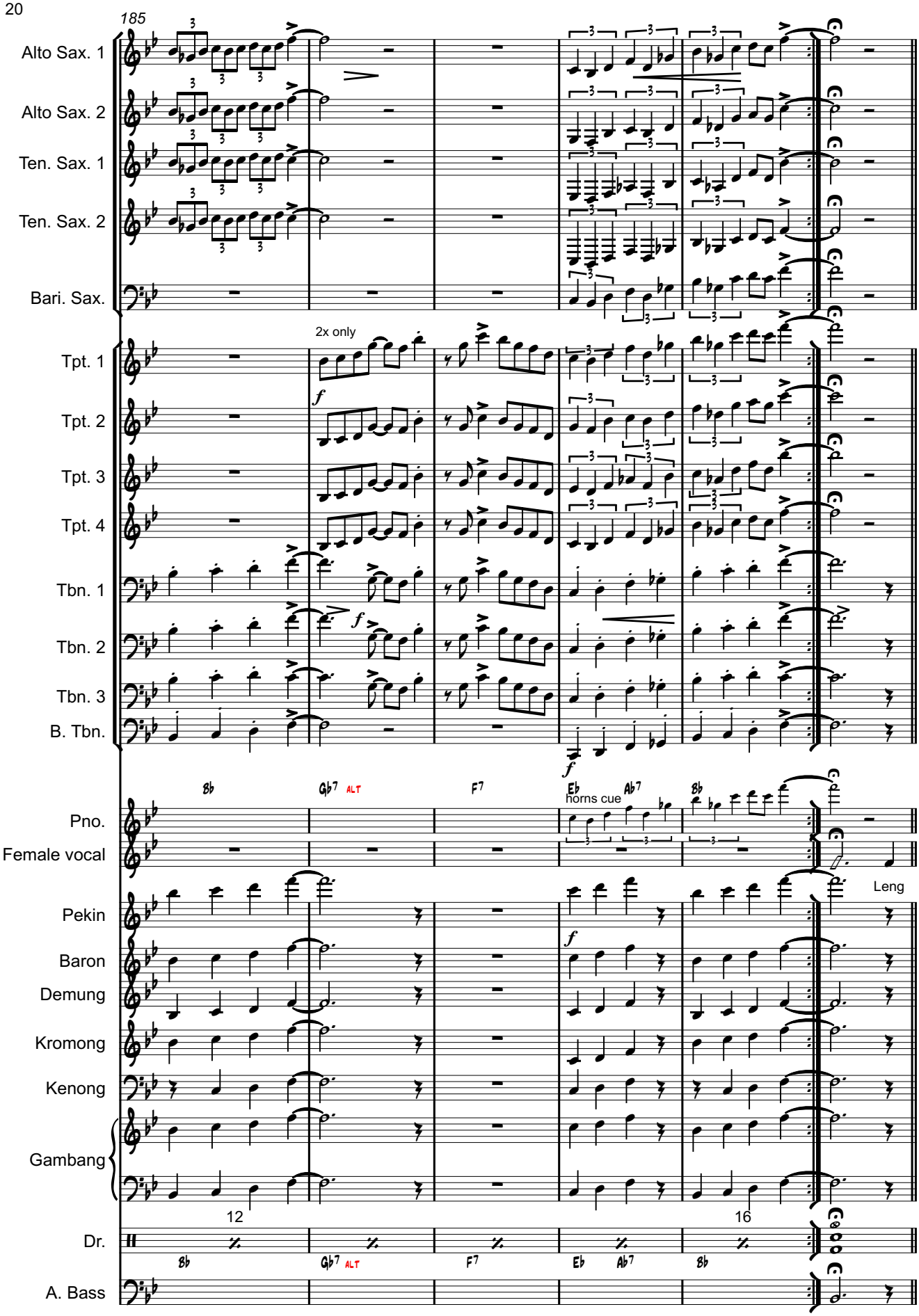

G
151
Alto Sax. 1
Alto Sax. 2
Ten. Sax. 1
Ten. Sax. 2
Bari. Sax.
Tpt. 1
Tpt. 2
Tpt. 3
Tpt. 4
Tbn. 1
Tbn. 2
Tbn. 3
B. Tbn.
F7 Eb Ab7 Bb Gb7 ALT F7 Eb Ab7 Bb Ebmaj7
Pno.
Pekin
Baron
Demung
Kromong
Kenong
Gambang
p
12
16
Dr.
F7 Eb Ab7 Bb Gb7 ALT F7 Eb Ab7 Bb Ebmaj7
A. Bass

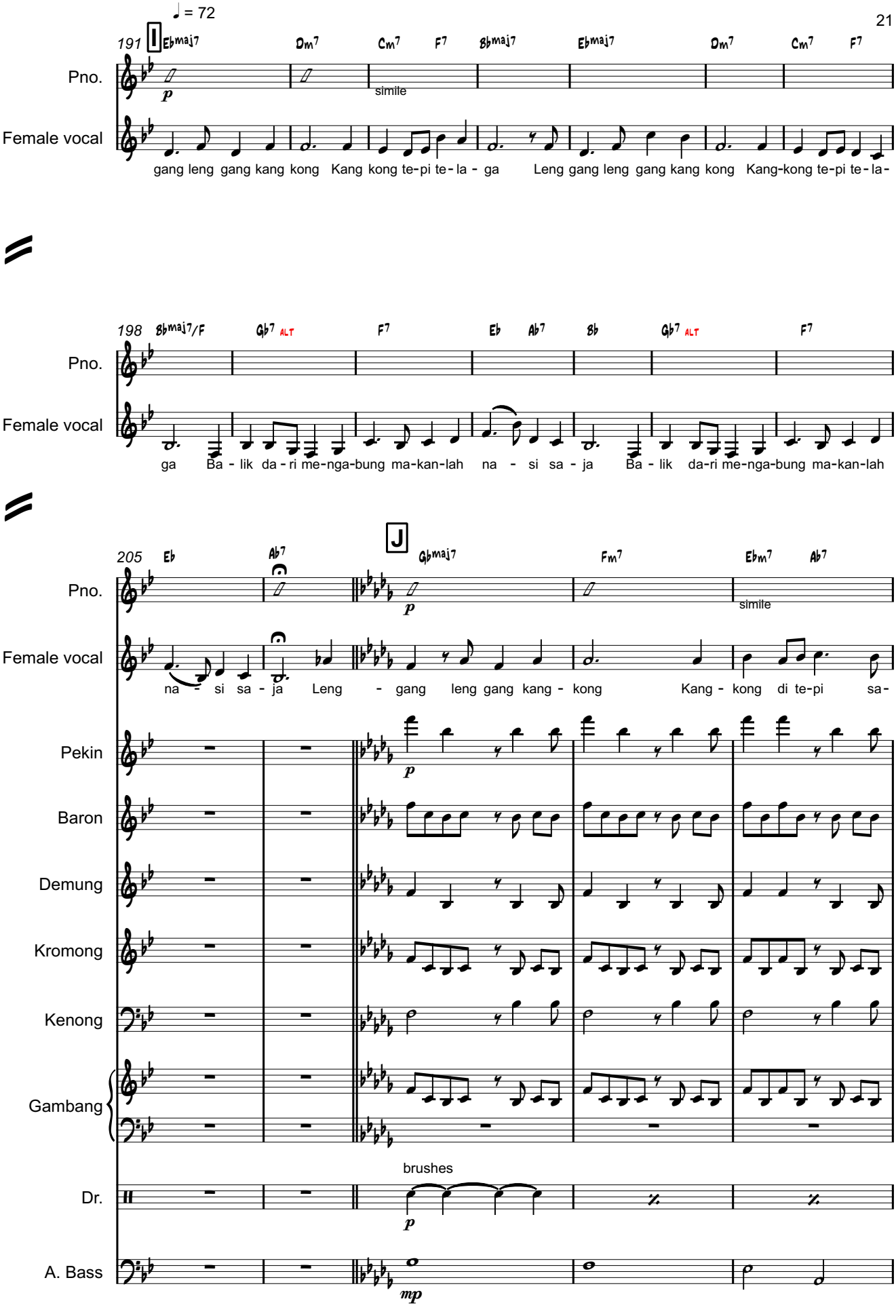

159
Alto Sax. 1
Alto Sax. 2
Ten. Sax. 1
Ten. Sax. 2
Bari. Sax.
Tpt. 1
Tpt. 2
Tpt. 3
Tpt. 4
Tbn. 1
Tbn. 2
Tbn. 3
B. Tbn.
Dm7 Cm7 F7 B♭maj7 E♭maj7 Dm7 Cm7 F7 B♭maj7 G♭7 ALT
Pno.
Pekin
Baron
Demung
Kromong
Kenong
p
Gambang
p
4
8
Dr.
Dm7 Cm7 F7 B♭maj7 E♭maj7 Dm7 Cm7 F7 B♭maj7 G♭7 ALT
A. Bass

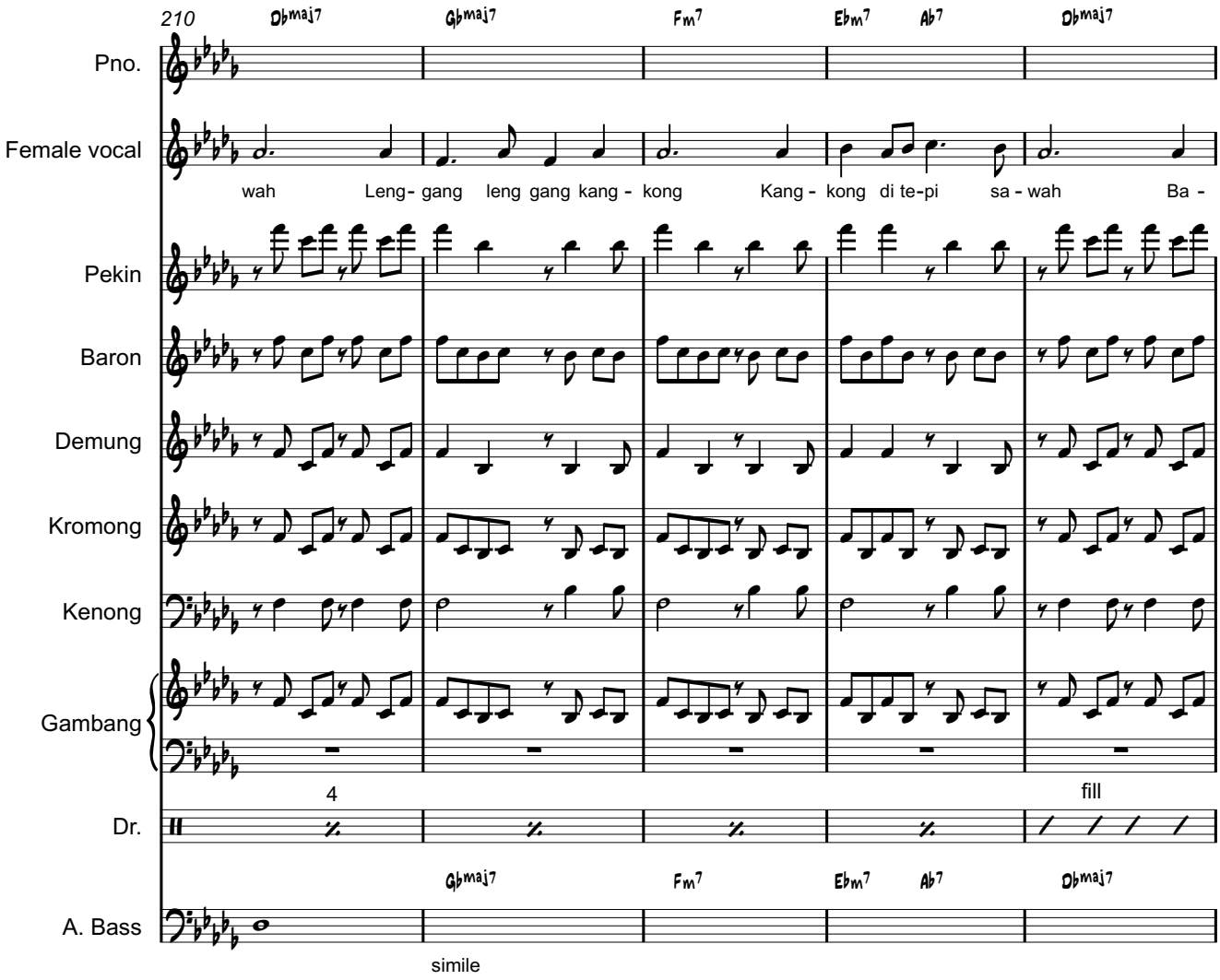

Alto Sax. 1
Alto Sax. 2
Ten. Sax. 1
Ten. Sax. 2
Bari. Sax.
f
Tpt. 1
Tpt. 2
Tpt. 3
Tpt. 4
Tbn. 1
Tbn. 2
Tbn. 3
B. Tbn.
f
F7 Eb Ab7 Bb Gb7 ALT F7 Eb Ab7 Bb
Pno.
Pekin
Baron
Demung
Kromong
Kenong
Gambang
12
16
Dr.
F7 Eb Ab7 Bb Gb7 ALT F7 Eb Ab7 Bb
A. Bass

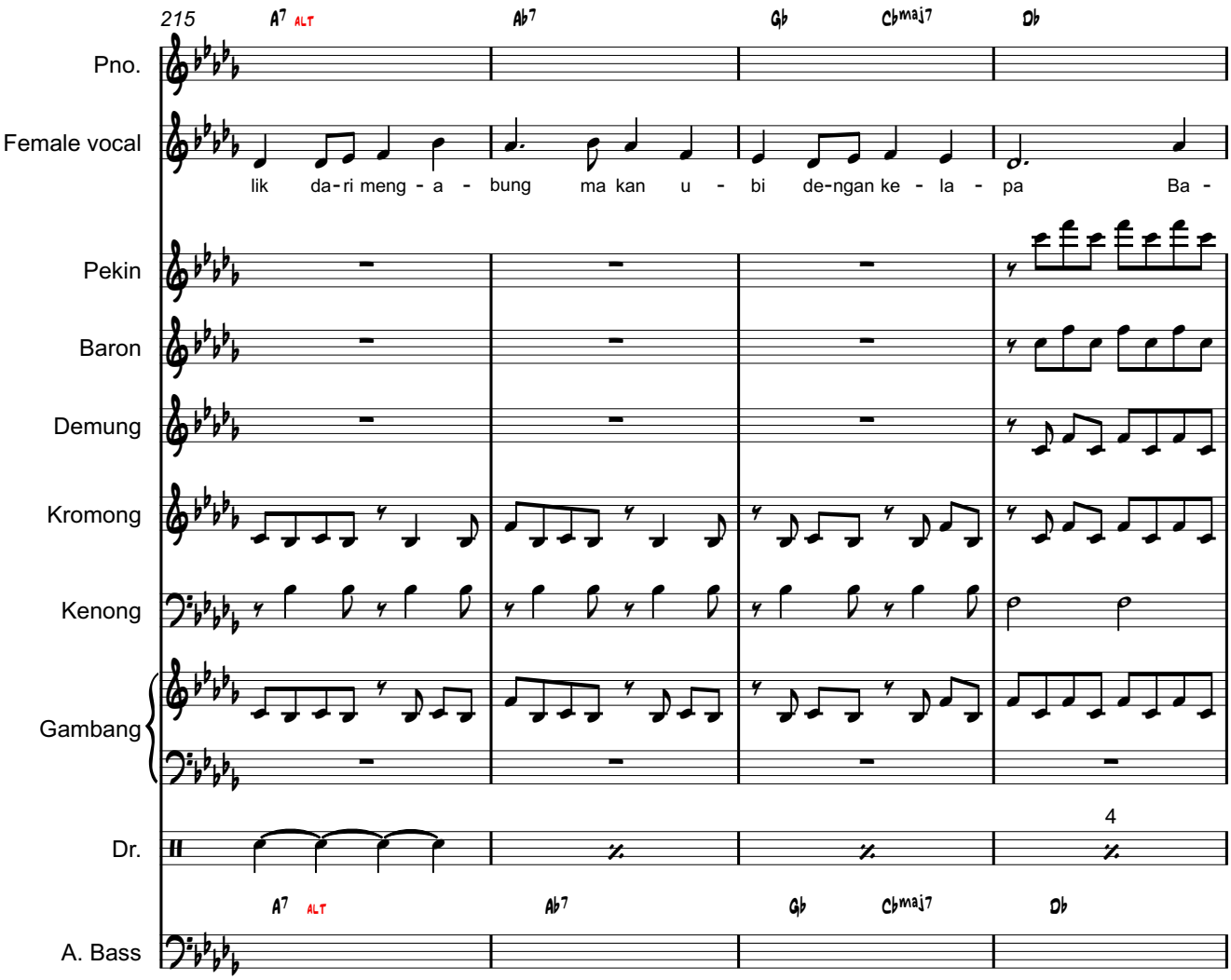

H
174
Alto Sax. 1
Alto Sax. 2
Ten. Sax. 1
Ten. Sax. 2
Bari. Sax.
Tpt. 1
Tpt. 2
Tpt. 3
Tpt. 4
Tbn. 1
Tbn. 2
Tbn. 3
B. Tbn.
Ebmaj7
Dm7
Cm7
F7
Bbmaj7
Ebmaj7
Dm7
Pno.
Pekin
Baron
Demung
Kromong
Kenong
Gambang
Dr.
4
Ebmaj7
Dm7
Cm7
F7
Bbmaj7
Ebmaj7
Dm7
A. Bass

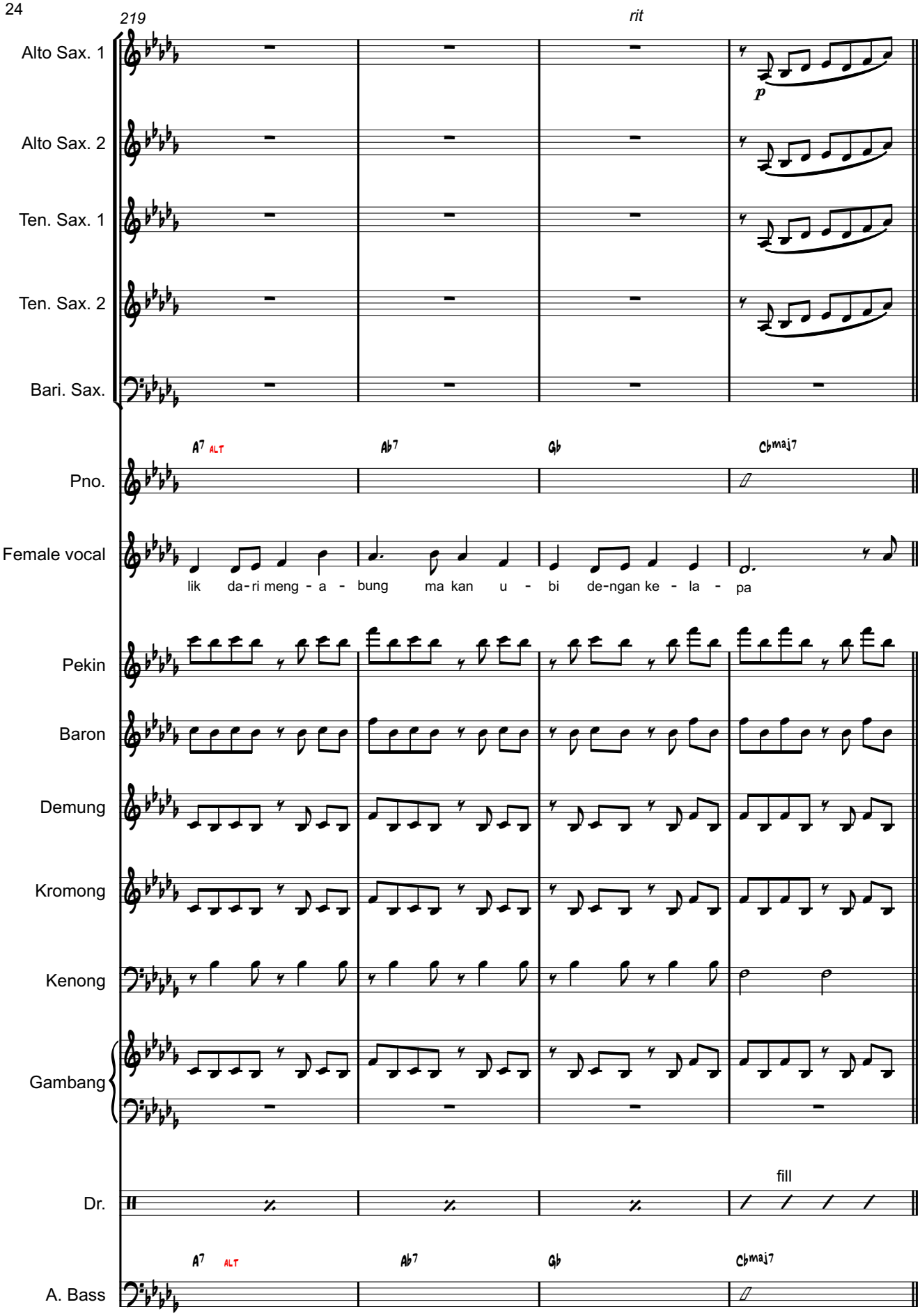

180
Alto Sax. 1
Alto Sax. 2
Ten. Sax. 1
Ten. Sax. 2
Bari. Sax.
Tpt. 1
Tpt. 2
Tpt. 3
Tpt. 4
Tbn. 1
Tbn. 2
Tbn. 3
B. Tbn.
Cm7 F7 Bbmaj7 Gb7 ALT F7 Eb Ab7
Pno.
Pekin
Baron
Demung
Kromong
Kenong
Gambang
8
Dr.
Cm7 F7 Bbmaj7 Gb7 ALT F7 Eb Ab7
A. Bass

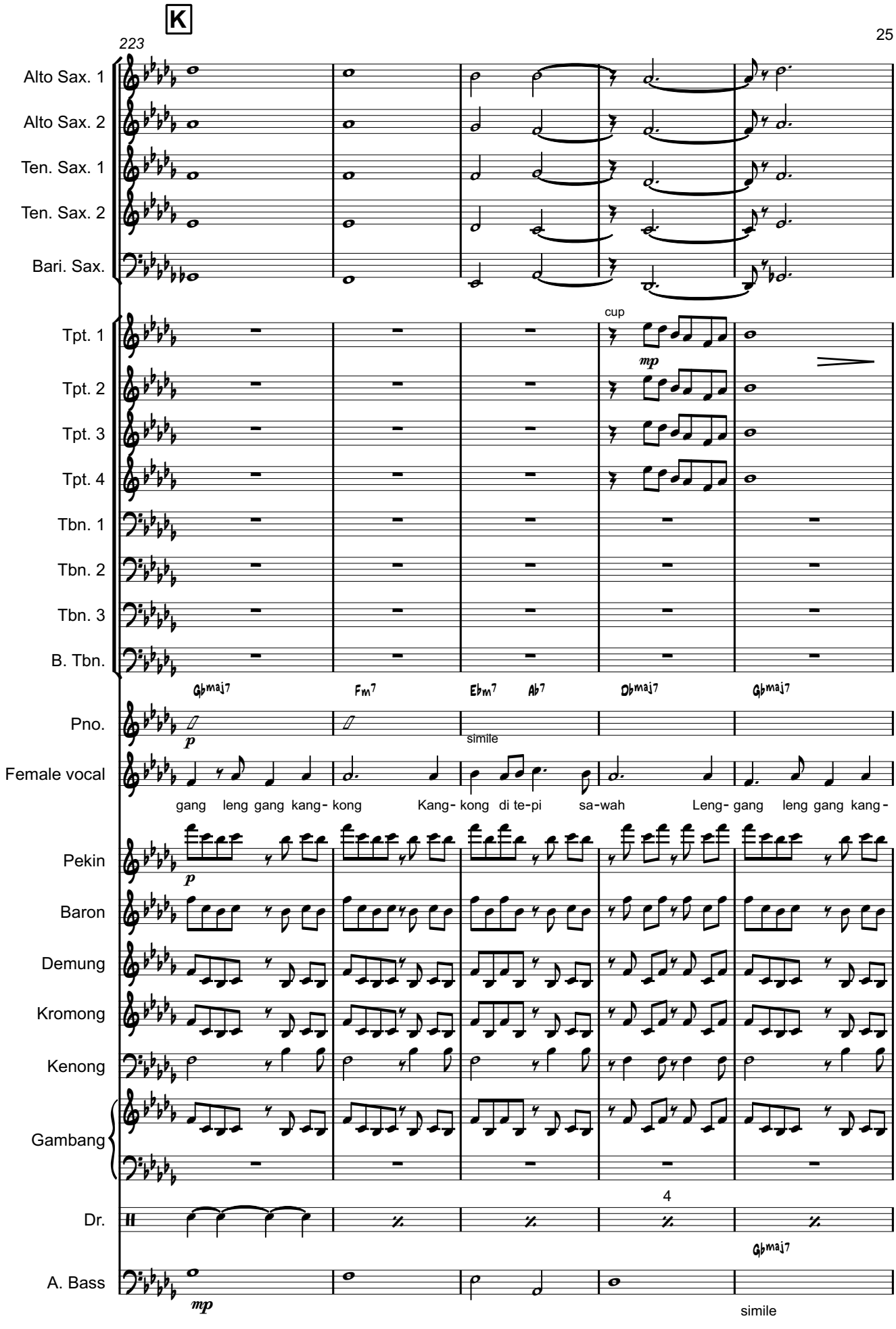

185
Alto Sax. 1
Alto Sax. 2
Ten. Sax. 1
Ten. Sax. 2
Bari. Sax.
2x only
Tpt. 1
Tpt. 2
Tpt. 3
Tpt. 4
Tbn. 1
Tbn. 2
Tbn. 3
B. Tbn.
Bb
Gb7 ALT
F7
Eb
Ab7
horns cue
Pno.
Female vocal
Leng
Pekin
Baron
Demung
Kromong
Kenong
Gambang
12
16
Dr.
A. Bass

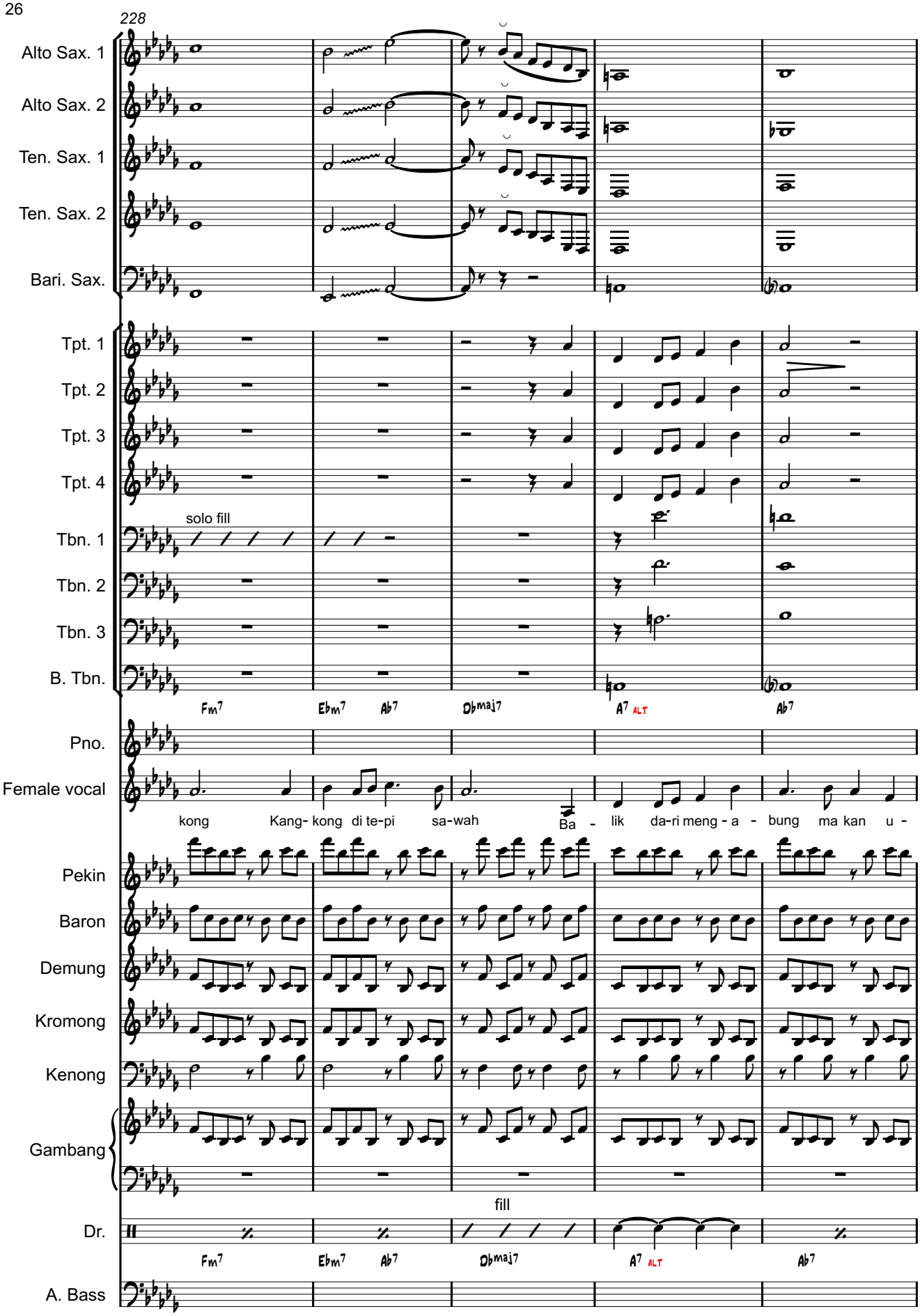

♩ = 72
191
I
Ebmaj7
Dm7
Cm7
F7
Bbmaj7
Ebmaj7
Dm7
Cm7
F7
Pno.
p
simile
Female vocal
gang leng gang kang kong Kang kong te-pi te-la-ga Leng gang leng gang kang kong Kang-kong te-pi te-la-
198
Bbmaj7/F
Gb7 ALT
F7
Eb
Ab7
Bb
Gb7 ALT
F7
Pno.
Female vocal
ga Ba-lik da-ri me-nga-bung ma-kan-lah na-si sa-ja Ba-lik da-ri me-nga-bung ma-kan-lah
205
Eb
Ab7
J
Gbmaj7
Fm7
Ebm7
Ab7
Pno.
p
simile
Female vocal
na-si sa-ja Leng-gang leng gang kang-kong Kang-kong di te-pi sa-
Pekin
p
Baron
Demung
Kromong
Kenong
Gambang
brushes
Dr.
p
A. Bass
mp

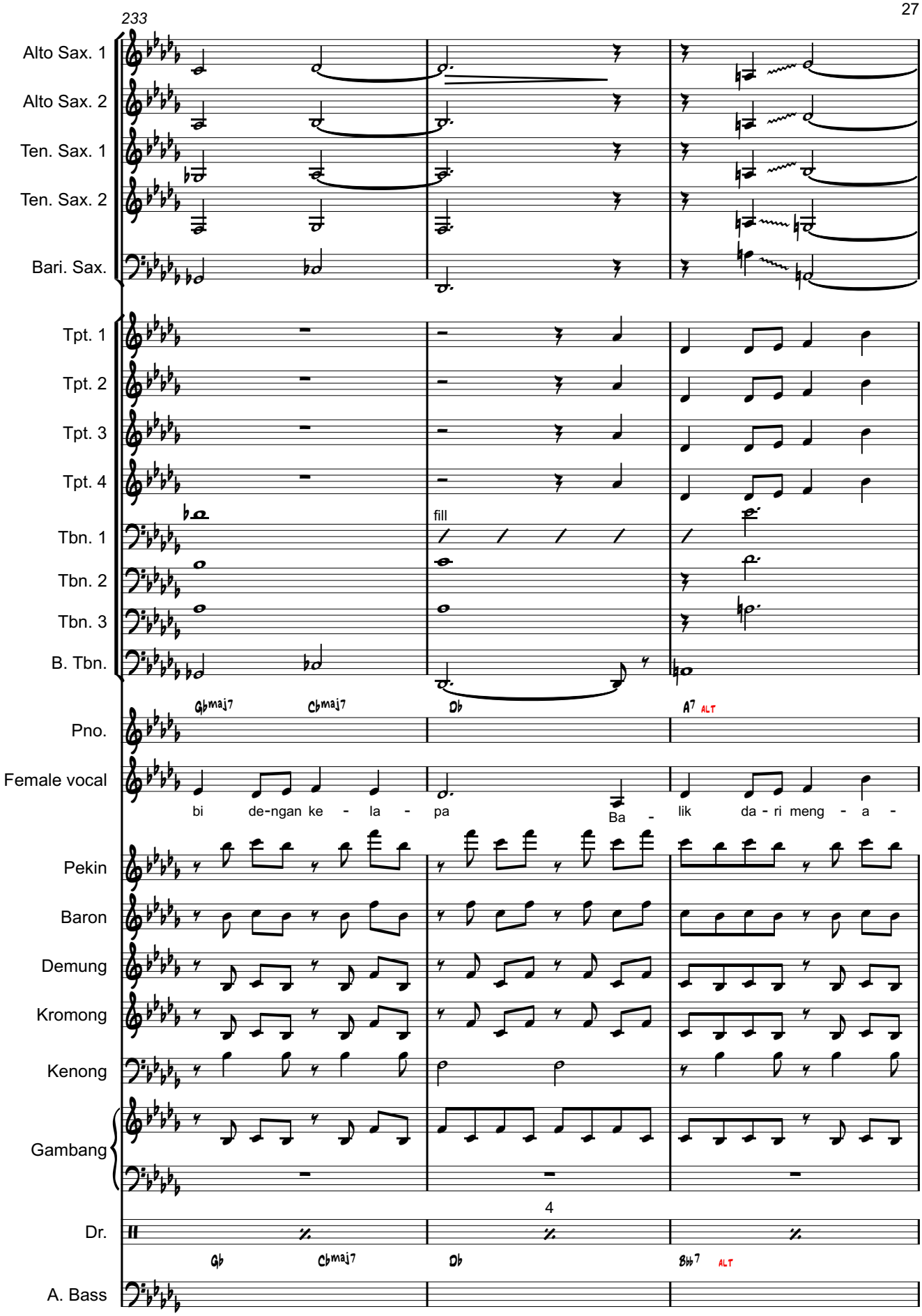

210
Dbmaj7
Gbmaj7
Fm7
Ebm7
Ab7
Dbmaj7
Pno.
Female vocal
wah Leng- gang leng gang kang - kong Kang - kong di te-pi sa - wah Ba -
Pekin
Baron
Demung
Kromong
Kenong
Gambang
4
fill
Dr.
Gbmaj7
Fm7
Ebm7
Ab7
Dbmaj7
A. Bass
simile

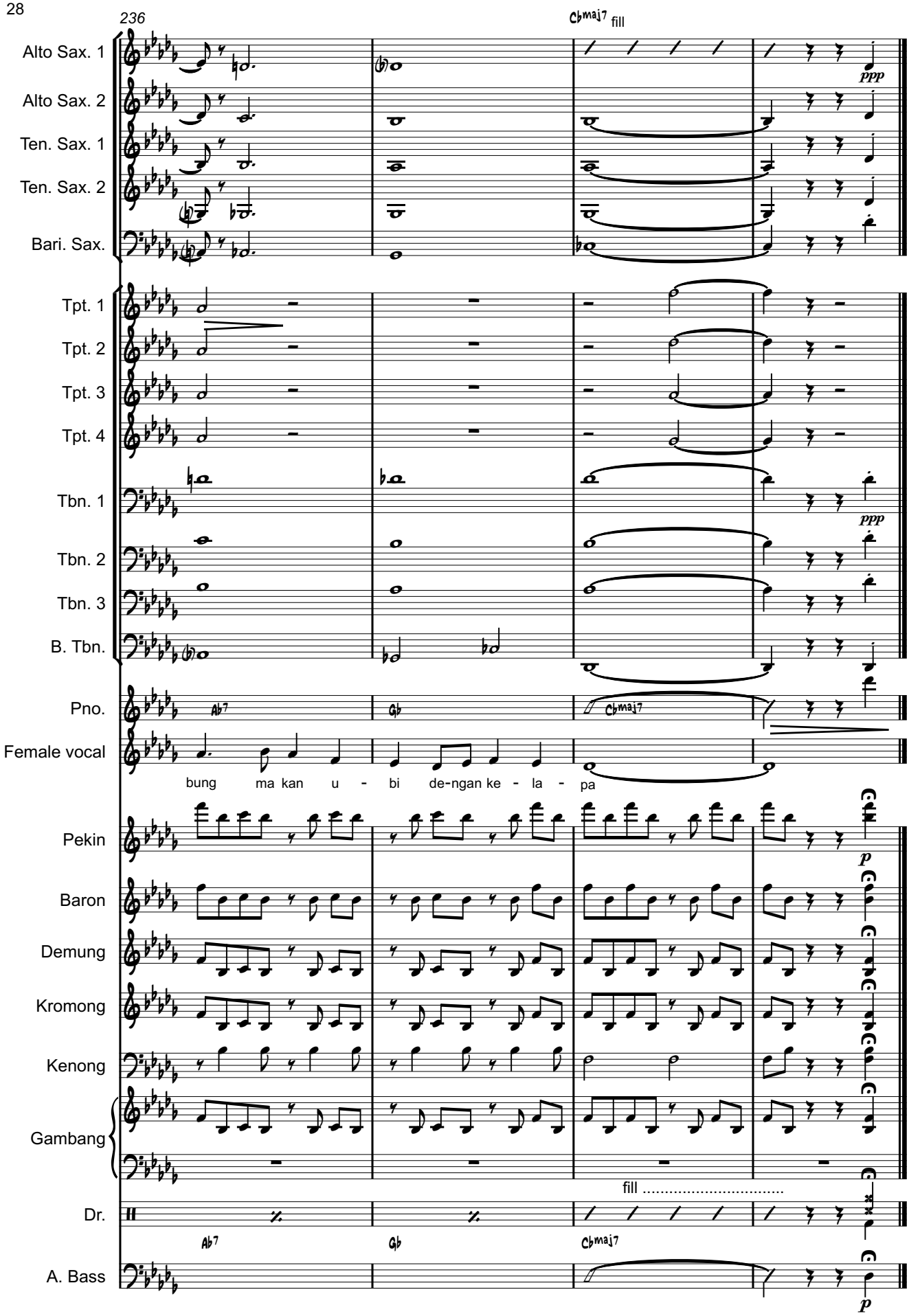

215
A7 ALT
Ab7
Gb
Cbmaj7
Db
Pno.
Female vocal
lik da-ri meng - a - bung ma kan u - bi de-ngan ke - la - pa Ba -
Pekin
Baron
Demung
Kromong
Kenong
Gambang
Dr.
4
A7 ALT
Ab7
Gb
Cbmaj7
Db
A. Bass


219
rit
Alto Sax. 1
Alto Sax. 2
Ten. Sax. 1
Ten. Sax. 2
Bari. Sax.
p
A7 ALT
Ab7
Gb
Cbmaj7
Pno.
Female vocal
lik da-ri meng - a - bung ma kan u - bi de-ngan ke - la - pa
Pekin
Baron
Demung
Kromong
Kenong
Gambang
Dr.
fill
A7 ALT
Ab7
Gb
Cbmaj7
A. Bass


K
223
Alto Sax. 1
Alto Sax. 2
Ten. Sax. 1
Ten. Sax. 2
Bari. Sax.
cup
mp
Tpt. 1
Tpt. 2
Tpt. 3
Tpt. 4
Tbn. 1
Tbn. 2
Tbn. 3
B. Tbn.
Gbmaj7
Fm7
Ebm7
Ab7
Dbmaj7
Gbmaj7
Pno.
p
simile
Female vocal
gang leng gang kang- kong
Kang- kong di te-pi
sa-wah
Leng- gang leng gang kang-
Pekin
p
Baron
Demung
Kromong
Kenong
Gambang
4
Dr.
Gbmaj7
A. Bass
mp
simile

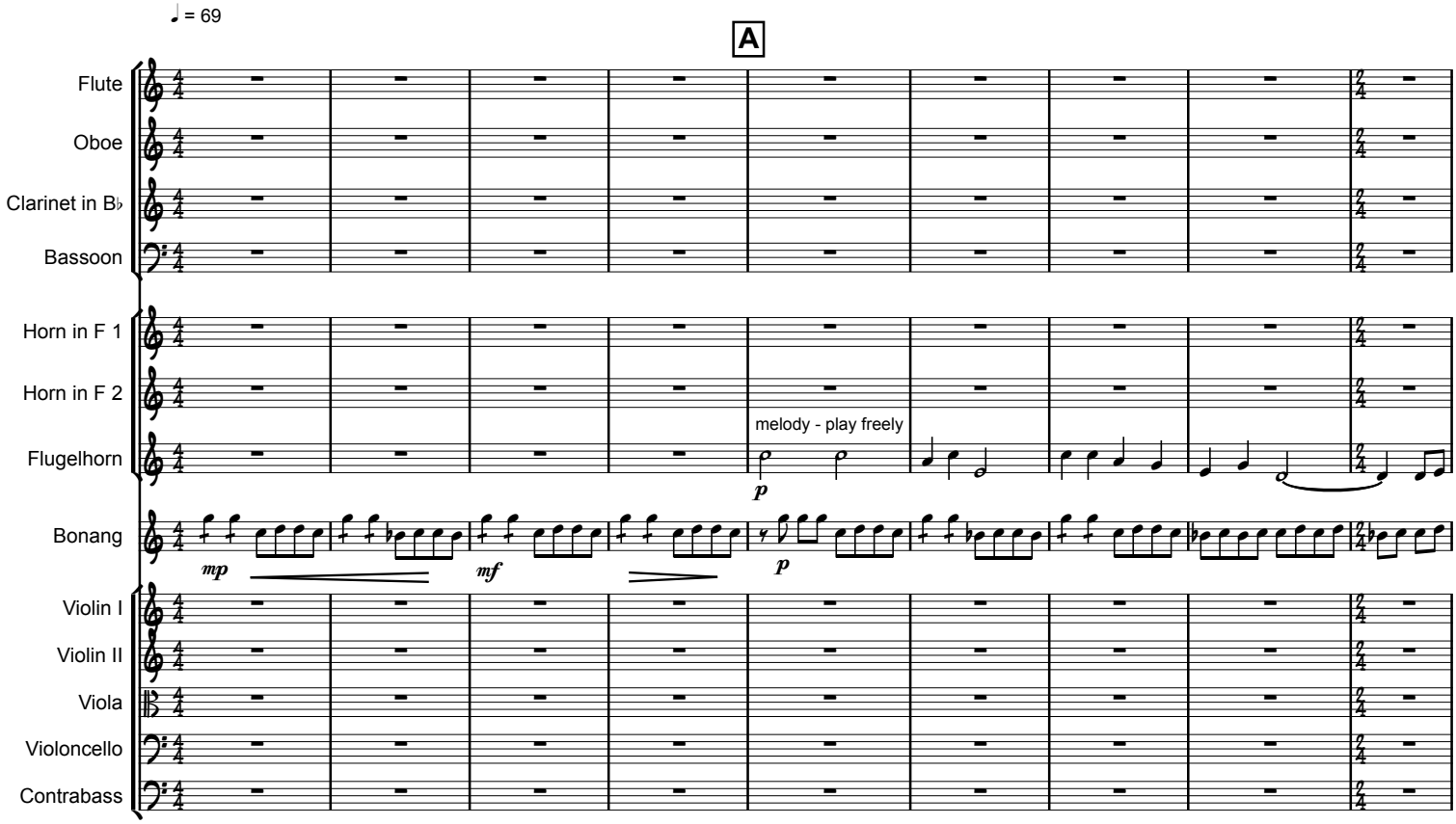

228
Alto Sax. 1
Alto Sax. 2
Ten. Sax. 1
Ten. Sax. 2
Bari. Sax.
Tpt. 1
Tpt. 2
Tpt. 3
Tpt. 4
solo fill
Tbn. 1
Tbn. 2
Tbn. 3
B. Tbn.
Fm7 Ebm7 Ab7 Dbmaj7 A7 ALT Ab7
Pno.
Female vocal
kong Kang- kong di te-pi sa-wah Ba - lik da-ri meng - a - bung ma kan u -
Pekin
Baron
Demung
Kromong
Kenong
Gambang
fill
Dr.
Fm7 Ebm7 Ab7 Dbmaj7 A7 ALT Ab7
A. Bass

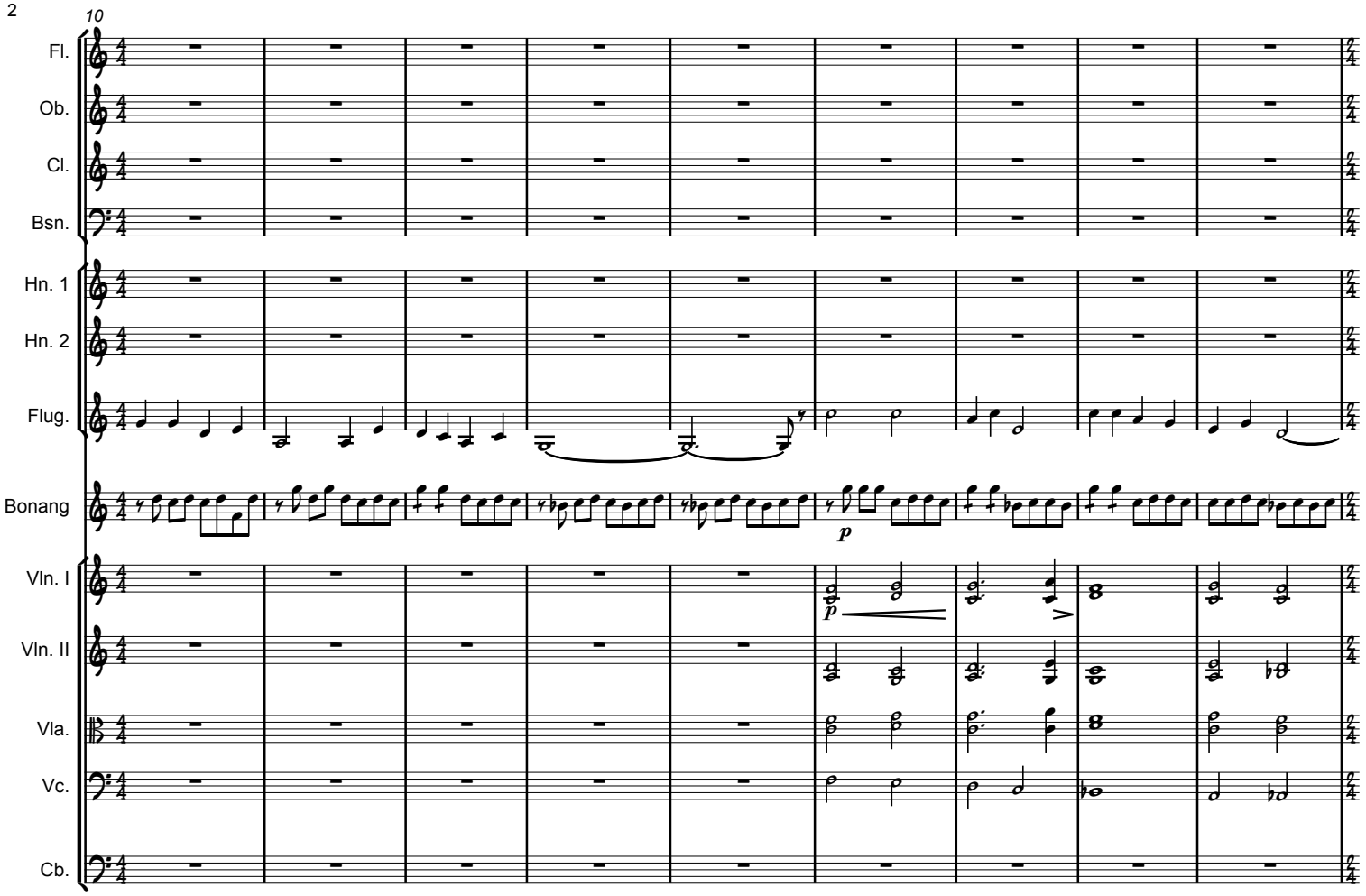

233
Alto Sax. 1
Alto Sax. 2
Ten. Sax. 1
Ten. Sax. 2
Bari. Sax.
Tpt. 1
Tpt. 2
Tpt. 3
Tpt. 4
Tbn. 1
Tbn. 2
Tbn. 3
B. Tbn.
fill
Gbmaj7
Cbmaj7
Db
A7 ALT
Pno.
Female vocal
bi de-ngan ke - la - pa
Ba - lik da - ri meng - a -
Pekin
Baron
Demung
Kromong
Kenong
Gambang
4
Dr.
Gb
Cbmaj7
Db
Bb7 ALT
A. Bass

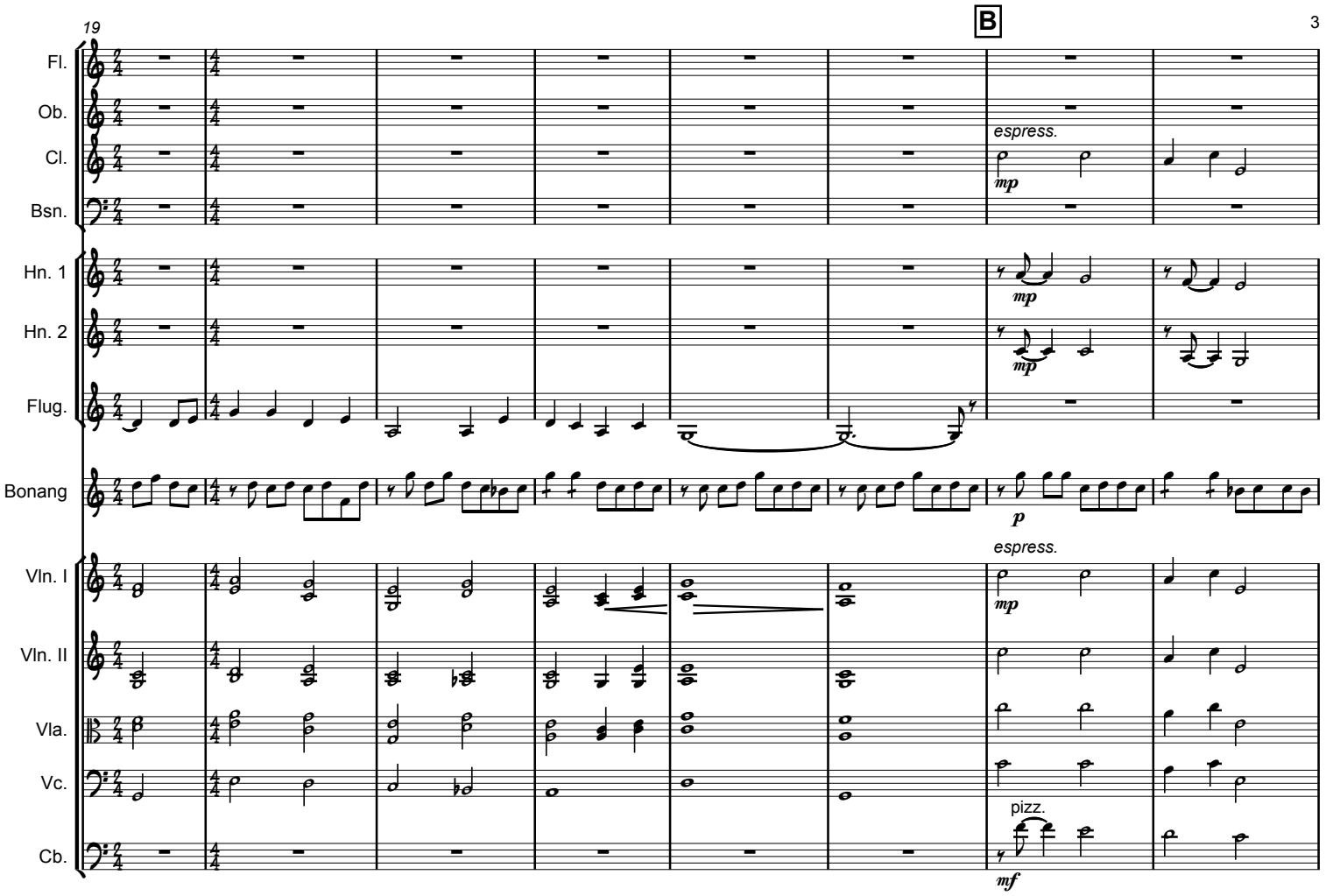

236
Cbmaj7 fill
Alto Sax. 1
Alto Sax. 2
Ten. Sax. 1
Ten. Sax. 2
Bari. Sax.
ppp
Tpt. 1
Tpt. 2
Tpt. 3
Tpt. 4
Tbn. 1
Tbn. 2
Tbn. 3
B. Tbn.
ppp
Pno.
Ab7
Gb
Cbmaj7
Female vocal
bung ma kan u - bi de-ngan ke - la - pa
Pekin
Baron
Demung
Kromong
Kenong
Gambang
p
fill .....
Dr.
Ab7
Gb
Cbmaj7
A. Bass
p

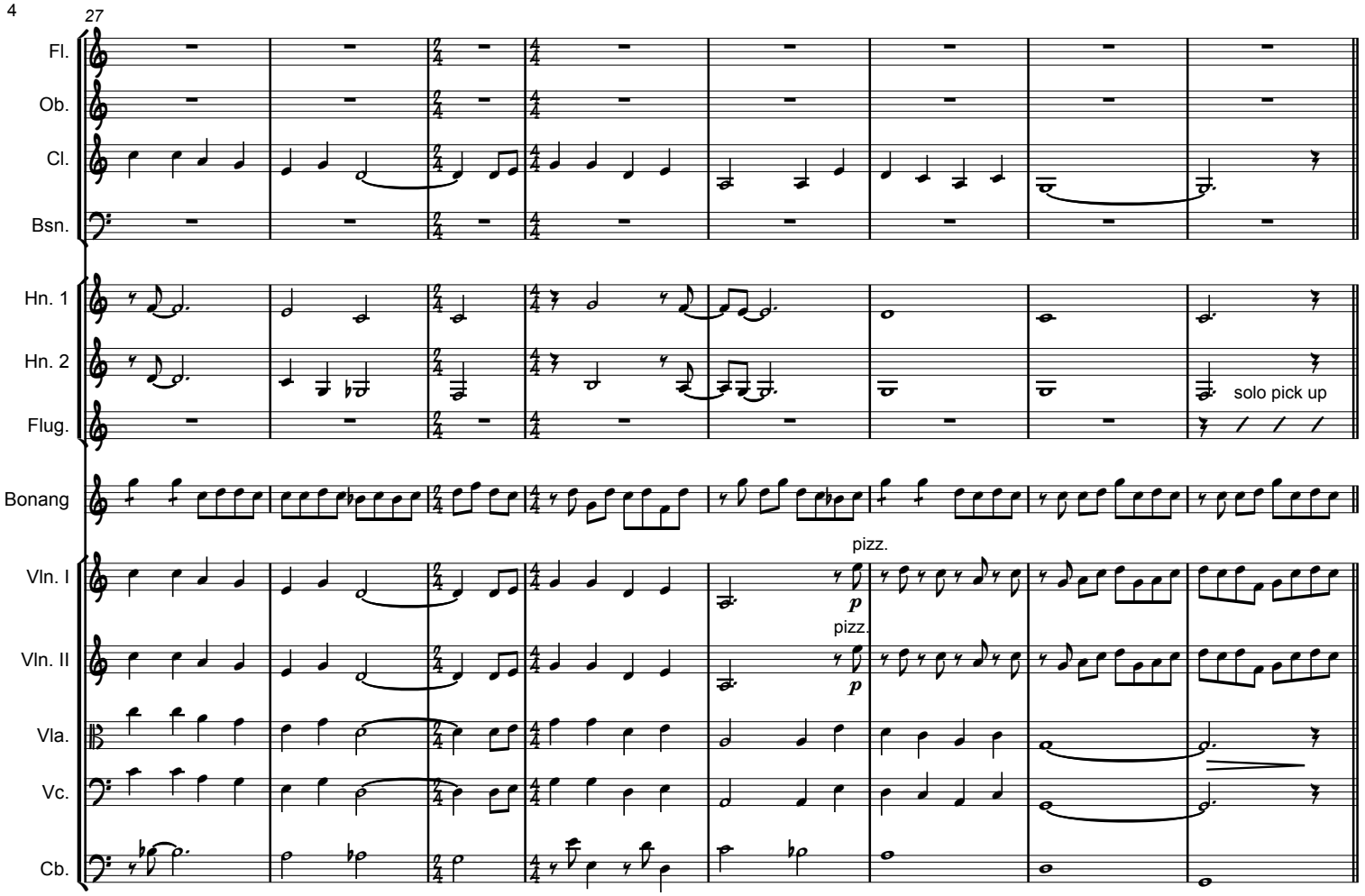
Jambatan Tamparuli

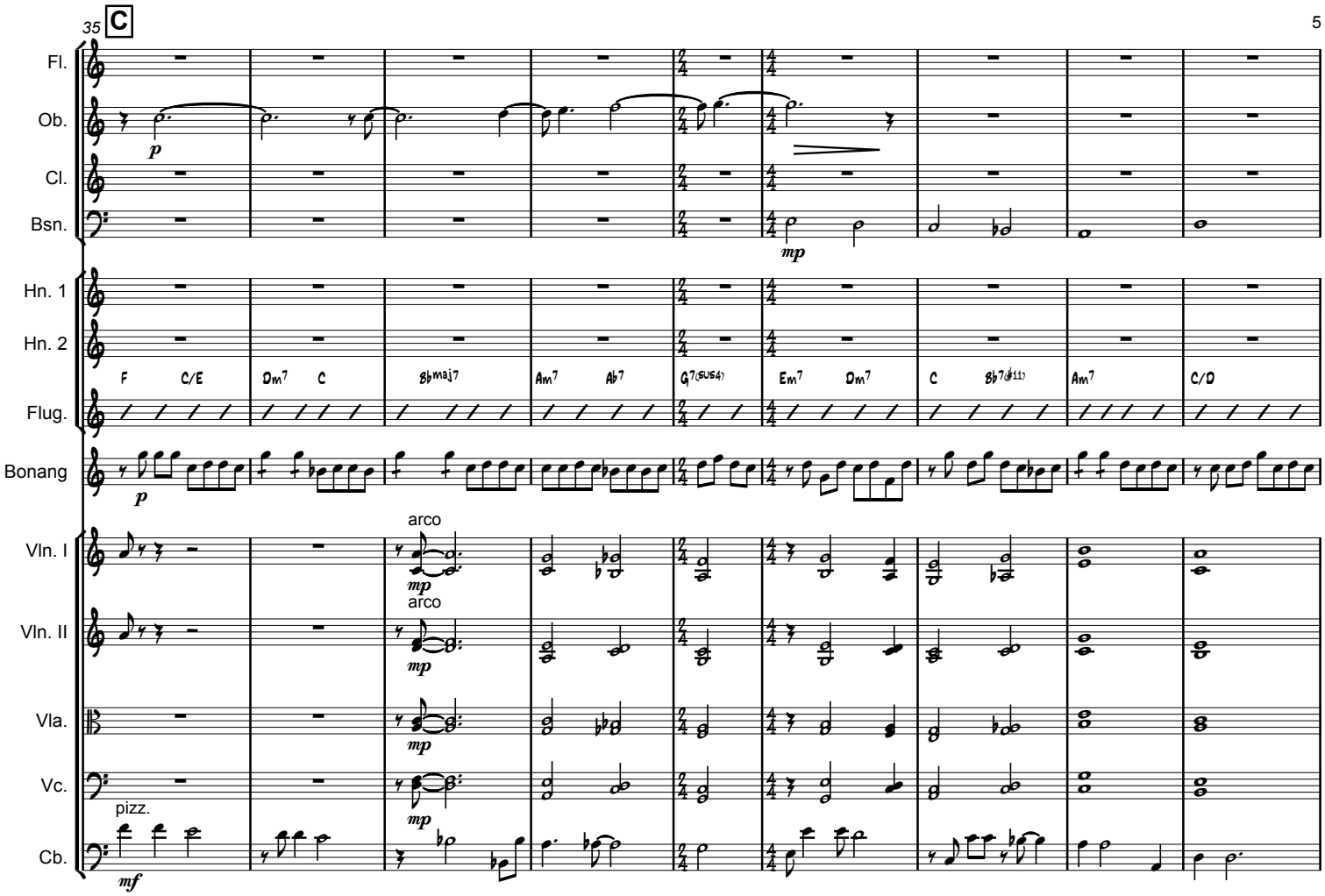
Traditional Sabah
Arr Isabella Pek
Sept 2012

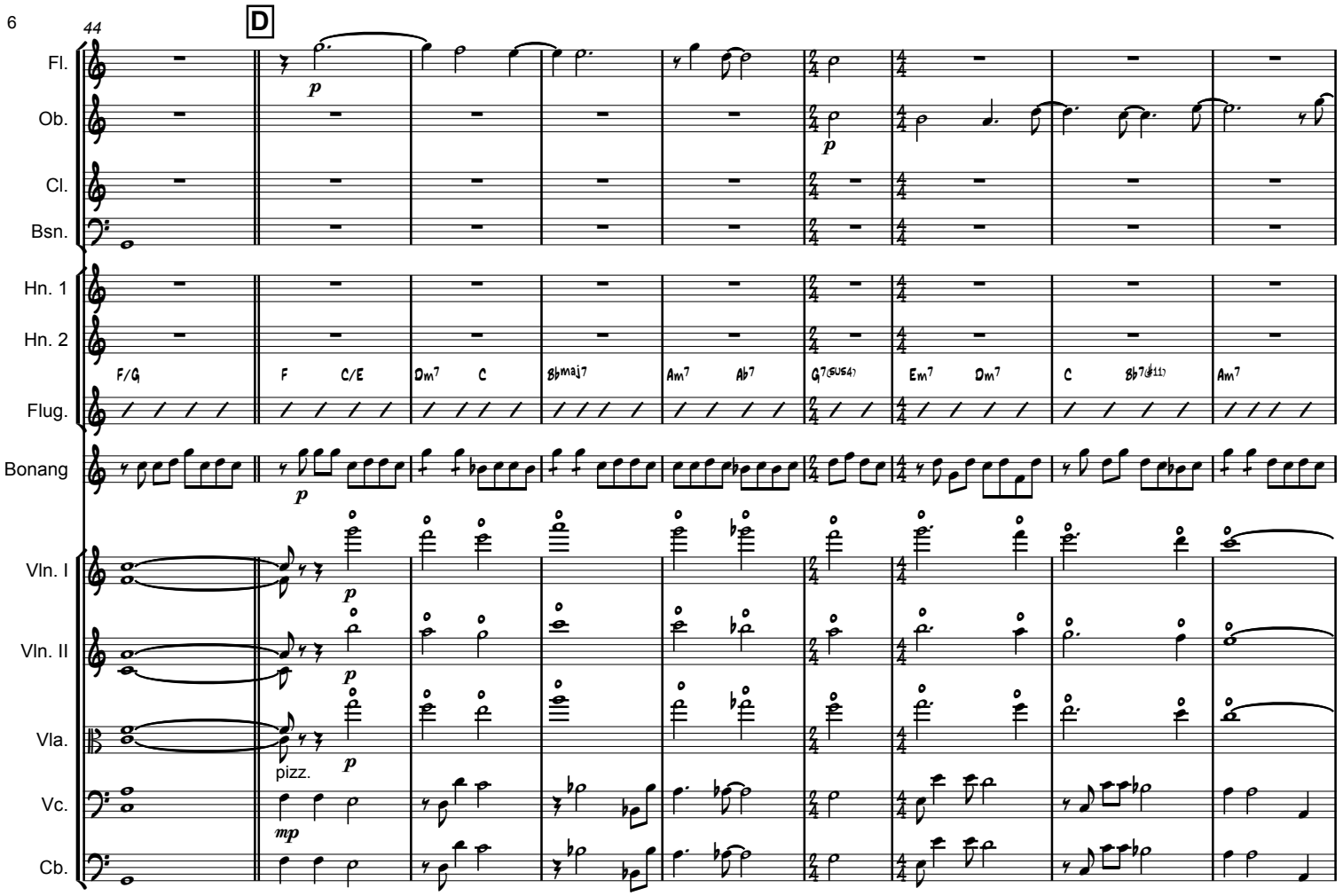


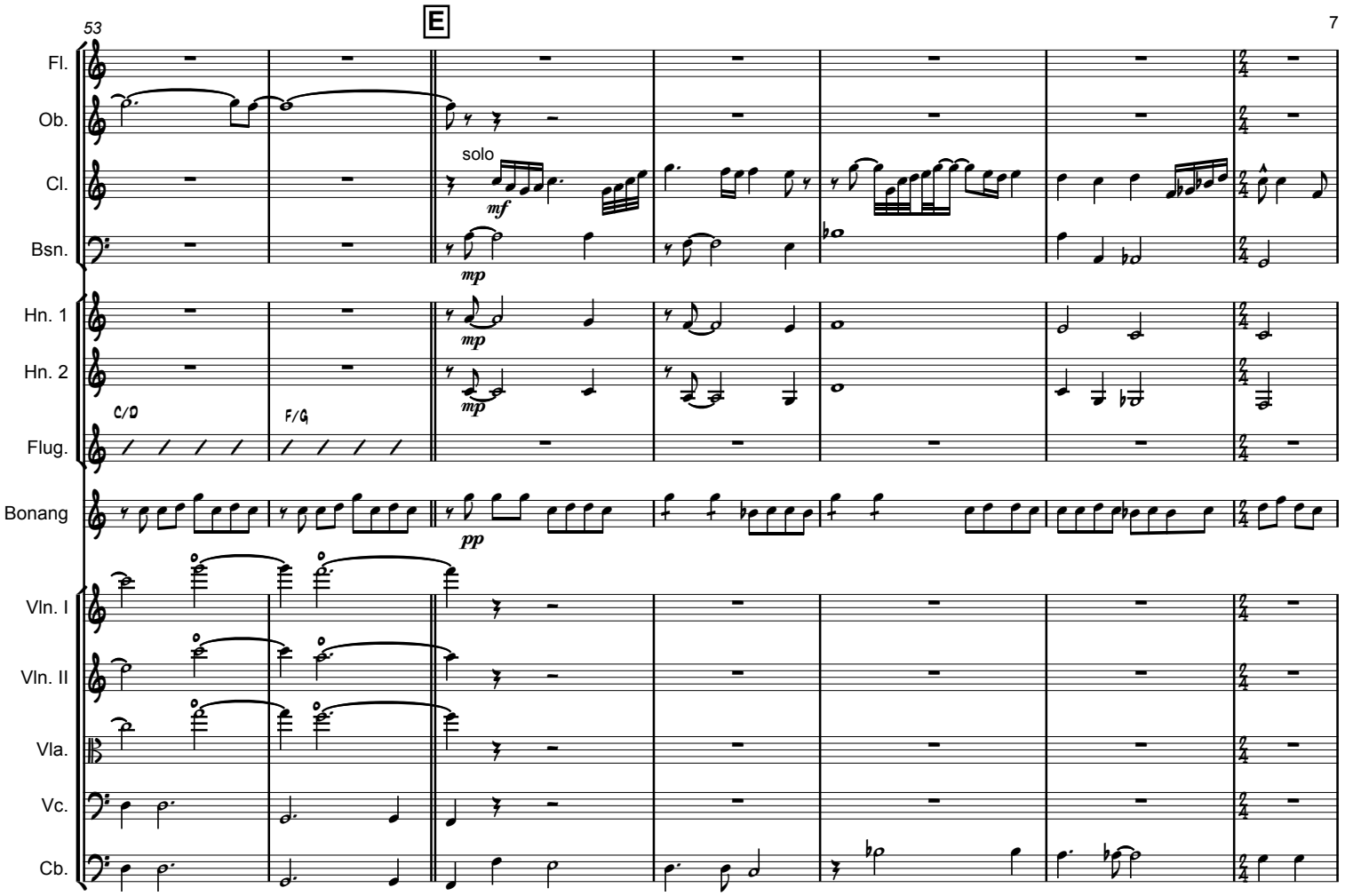

10
Fl.
Ob.
Cl.
Bsn.
Hn. 1
Hn. 2
Flug.
Bonang
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Cb.
p
p

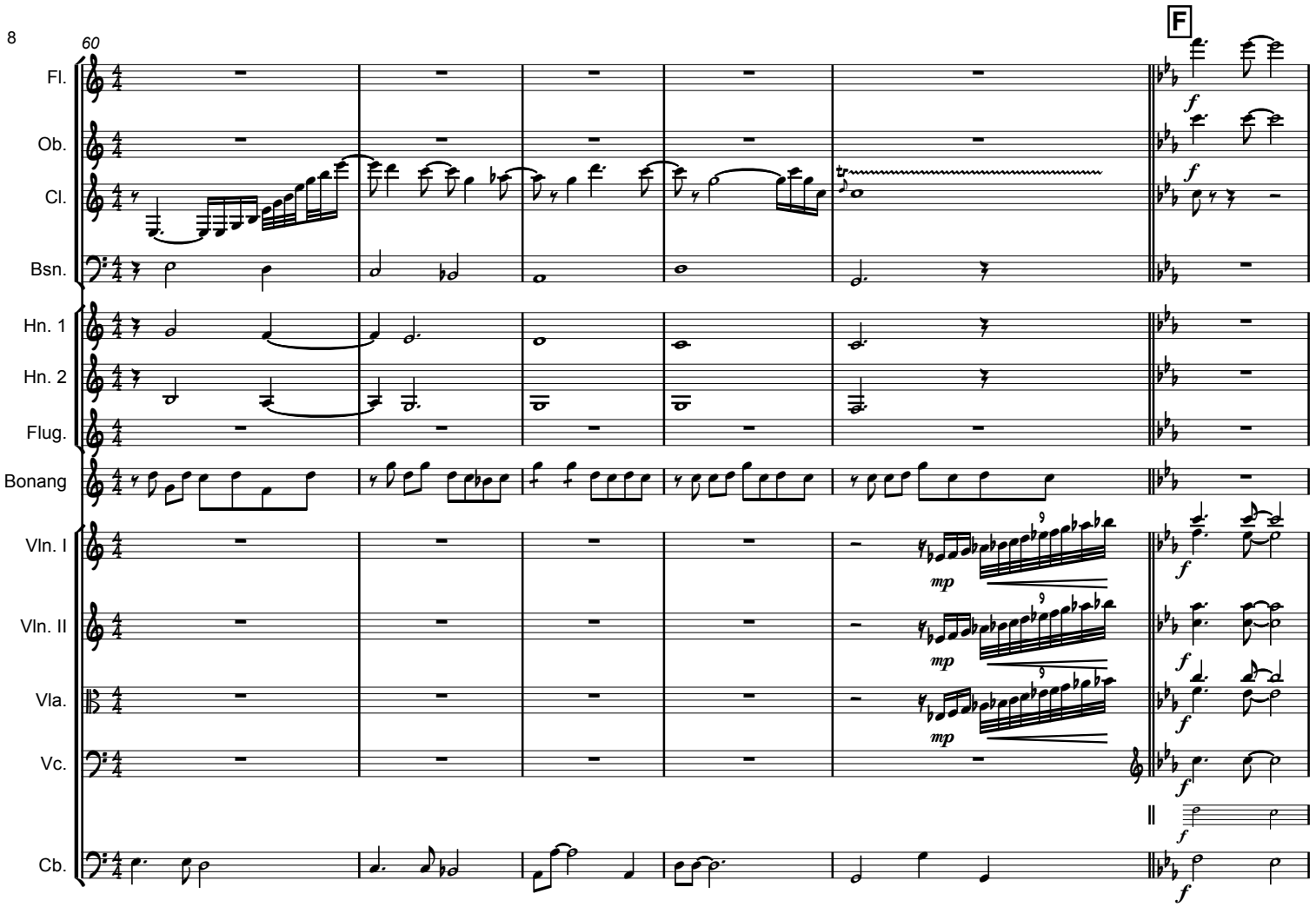

19
B
Fl.
Ob.
Cl.
Bsn.
Hn. 1
Hn. 2
Flug.
Bonang
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Cb.
espress.
mp
mp
mp
mp
p
espress.
mp
pizz.
mf

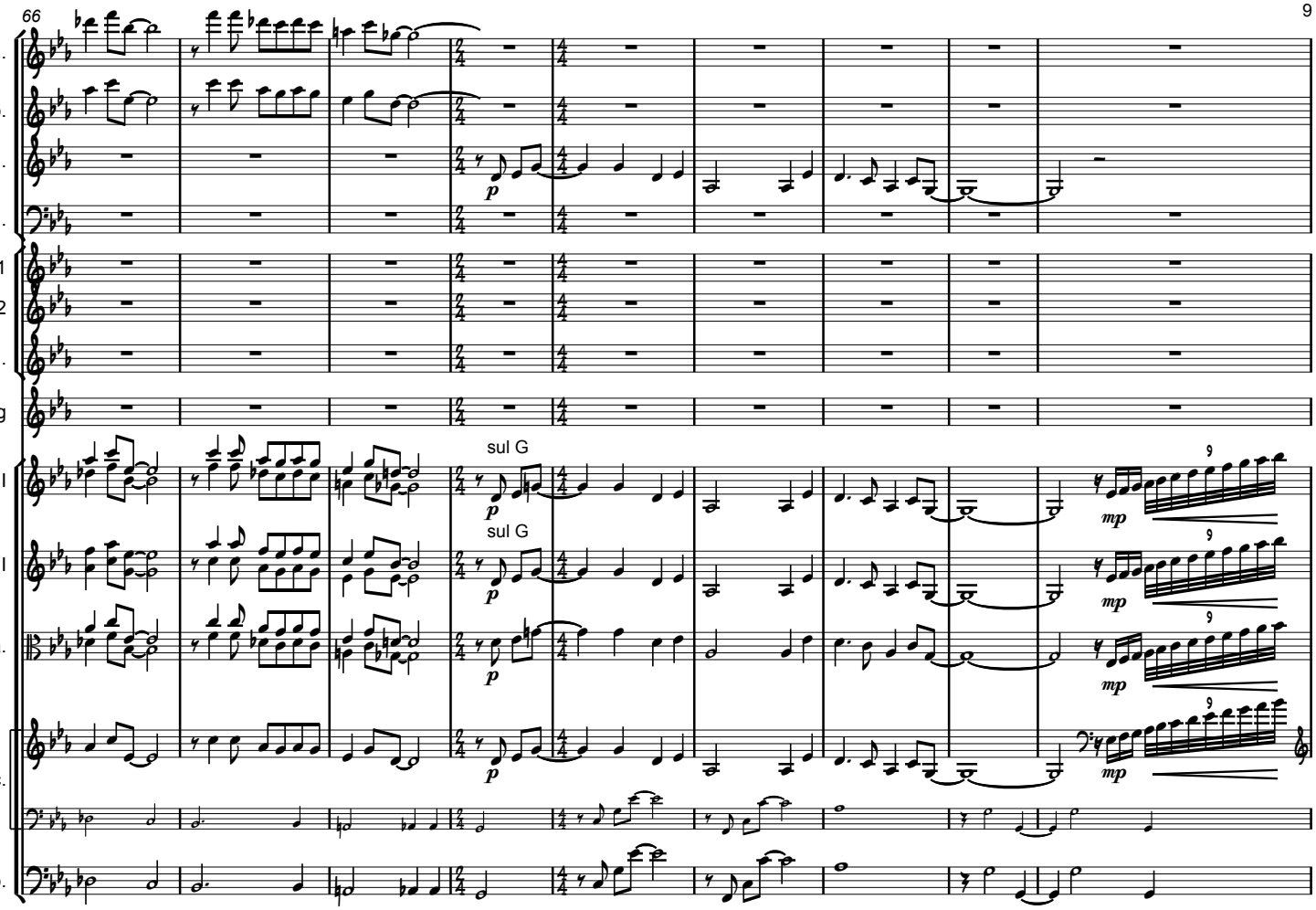

27
Fl.
Ob.
Cl.
Bsn.
Hn. 1
Hn. 2
Flug.
solo pick up
Bonang
Vln. I
pizz.
p
Vln. II
pizz.
p
Vla.
Vc.
Cb.

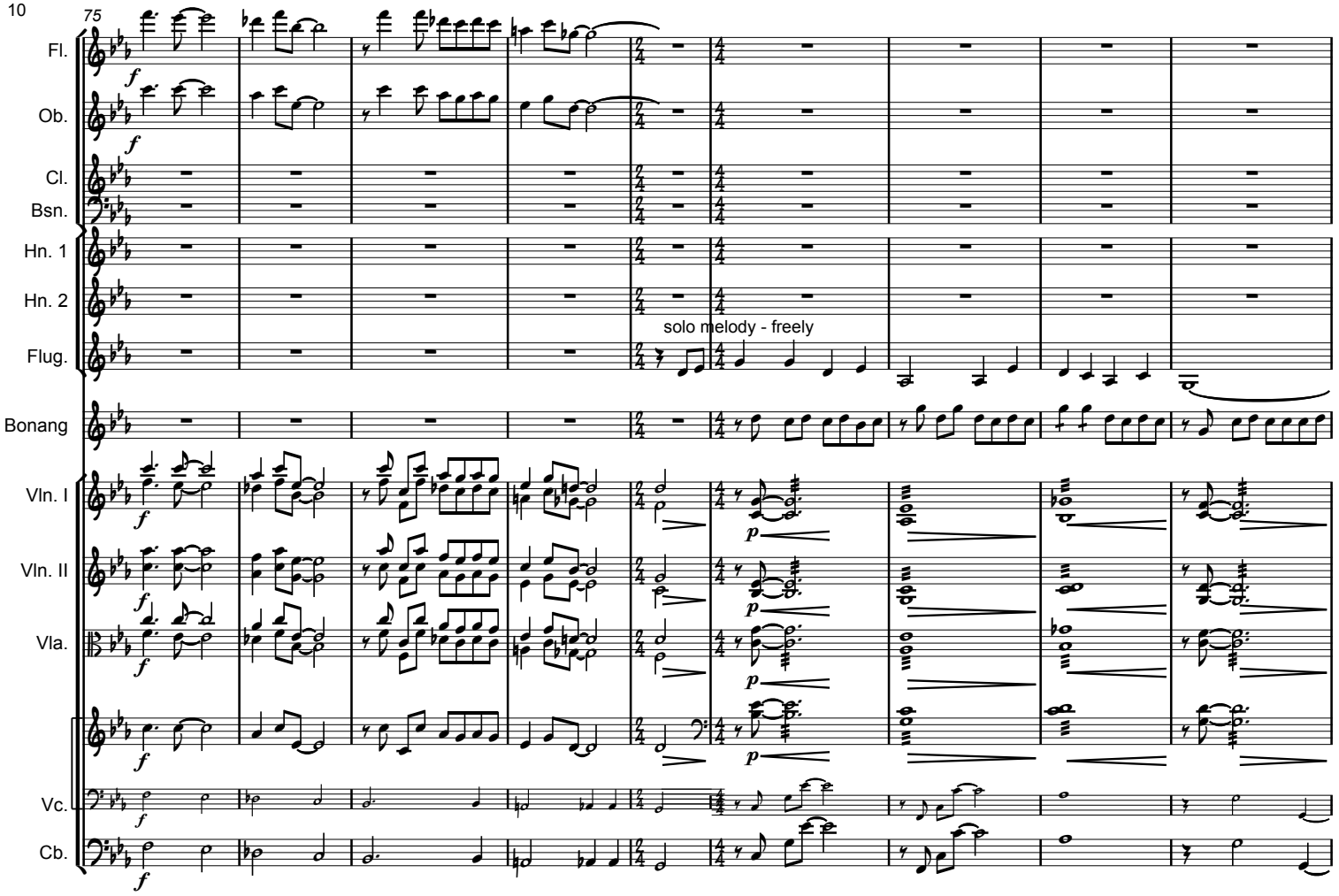

35
C
Fl.
Ob.
Cl.
Bsn.
Hn. 1
Hn. 2
Flug.
Bonang
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Cb.
p
mp
F C/E Dm7 C B♭maj7 Am7 Ab7 G7(sus4) Em7 Dm7 C B♭7(♯11) Am7 C/D
arco
arco
pizz.
mf

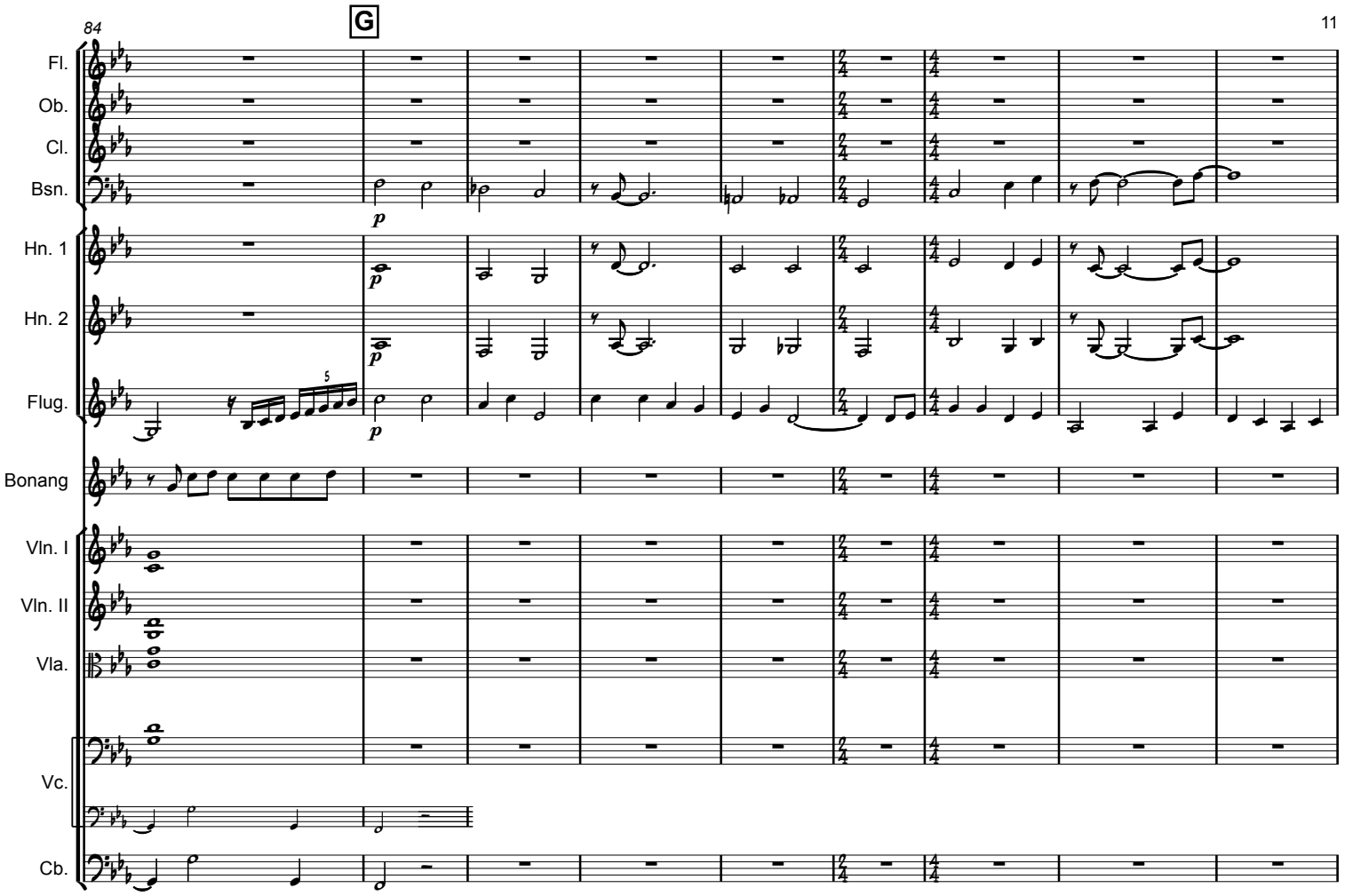

44
D
Fl.
Ob.
Cl.
Bsn.
Hn. 1
Hn. 2
Flug.
Bonang
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Cb.
F/G
F
C/E
Dm7
C
B♭maj7
Am7
A♭7
G7(sus4)
Em7
Dm7
C
B♭7(♯11)
Am7
p
mp
pizz.

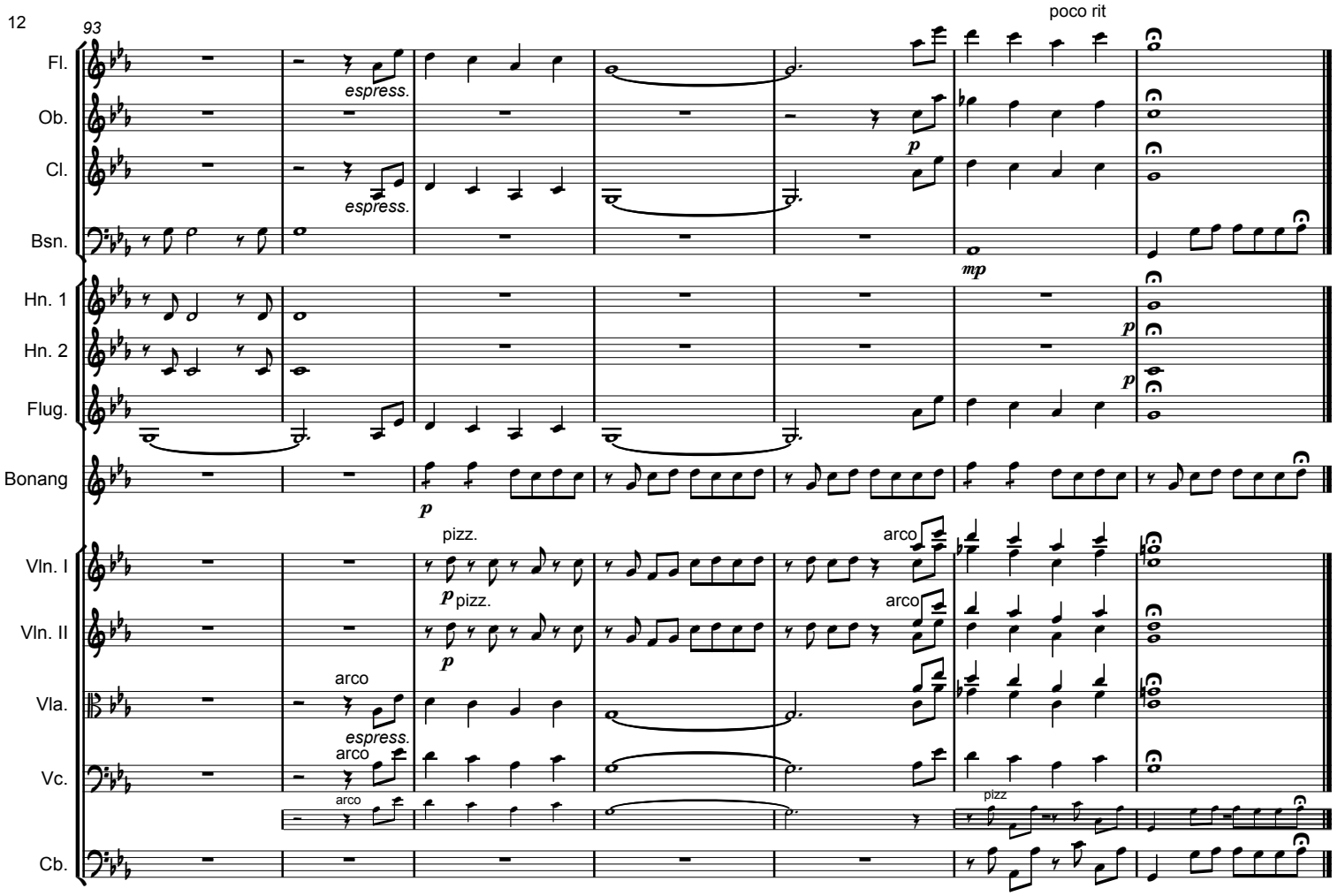

53
E
Fl.
Ob.
Cl.
Bsn.
Hn. 1
Hn. 2
Flug.
Bonang
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Cb.
solo
mf
mp
mp
mp
pp
C/D
F/G


60
F
Fl.
Ob.
Cl.
Bsn.
Hn. 1
Hn. 2
Flug.
Bonang
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Cb.
mp
f


66
Fl.
Ob.
Cl.
Bsn.
Hn. 1
Hn. 2
Flug.
Bonang
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Cb.
sul G
sul G
p
mp


75
Fl.
Ob.
Cl.
Bsn.
Hn. 1
Hn. 2
Flug.
solo melody - freely
Bonang
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Cb.


84
G
Fl.
Ob.
Cl.
Bsn.
Hn. 1
Hn. 2
Flug.
Bonang
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Cb.
p
5


12
93
poco rit
Fl.
Ob.
Cl.
Bsn.
Hn. 1
Hn. 2
Flug.
Bonang
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Cb.
espress.
espress.
mp
p
p
p
p
pizz.
p pizz.
arco
arco
arco
arco
espress.
arco
arco
pizz